

Helpful hints on leading a guided tour

Guided tours are an important method of communication. Whether it is a tour of a museum, factory, campus, or an outside tour of an historical site, zoo, or outdoor experience; giving the background and story is an important skill for anyone wishing to deliver the best tour possible.

There are some basic principles which apply wherever you are. The following guidelines are based on the experience of guides leading guided walks through a venue or other experience.

Guided Tours are often one of the occasions to impress guests and to really ensure that they get what they came for and that you leave them with the best impression of you and your organisation. It is important that all guided tours work as well as possible, and are a good first experience to leave a positive and lasting impression. This includes both public guided tours and those done for particular groups.

Rehearse your tour message and try it out with people you trust and with those that will provide you with honest feedback on how to improve. Consider not just the message you will deliver, but also what you will say as you walk from one area to another.

Consider using a wireless tour guide system that will ensure that your audience can hear your message. These systems provide your guests to have individual volume control and will allow the guides to experience less voice strain and fatigue. With a tour guide system, your guests will feel like they can walk around and not have to be confined to the group. Consider how to manage a tour guide system –

Handing out the system to guests. Consider having a volunteer assist in helping with this as you'll want to instruct the guests on how to use the devices.

How will you ensure that your guests return the system? Consider a system such as an ID card is held until the system is returned.

Test the system's clarity with your guests prior to leaving on the tour to ensure the system is turned on and all units are working properly.

Publicity is crucial. Press release, Posters, announcements, a sign at the meeting point, and other means are all useful. By far the best method, however, is to link up with (or start) a regular series of tours. This can give you a ready-made audience. It's useful, if you can, to organise the events regularly, e.g. every second Saturday, so people get in the habit of coming. If you have a series of tours you can produce a brochure, and distribute it via Tourist Information Centres etc. This tends to be more successful than a number of individually organised tours.



Be sure that your publicity, whatever it is, includes at least the following:

- What the event is
- Where it is?
- When (date, time and day of week)?
- How long it lasts.
- How to get there.
- Contact number for the guide.
- Any special requirements, e.g. induction neck loop for hearing aid wearers, walking shoes, no loose clothing, identification required, etc.
- Arrive at the meeting point at least 10 minutes beforehand, and leave the meeting point between five and ten minutes after the advertised time.

Starting a Guided Tour



To start off with there are a number of things which should be said, even if many of the group have been out with you before.

Introduce yourself, giving your name and job title if you have one. Introduce any other members of staff present if they want to be introduced.

Welcome the visitors to the place/project, on behalf of your employer and/or the site owner if you are doing it for them. If the project is sponsored or supported by any organisation they will probably appreciate a mention too.

Explain what the tour is and how long it will last. Be sure to keep to this time!

Give a warning if there is likely to be any noise or area where you need to exhibit a behaviour, e.g. keeping noise down in an area as to not disturb others.

Before you set off, give a brief description of the route you will take and inform the visitors where they will end up.

Address at this time if you will accommodate questions and the plan for doing so. If using a tour guide system, you may ask the visitors to inform you when they have a question so that the guide can address their question with the microphone so that all visitors can hear the question and the answer. You may also decide to stop at certain points in the tour to address any questions that may have come up.

If using a tour guide system on the tour, you'll want to be prepared to offer filler conversation as you move from one area to another. Using a system and not speaking at all times, may cause your guests to wonder if their system is working. A pre-recorded commentary or music from an mp3 player feeding the tour guide system can help keep the group focused as well as reduce fatigue.

Finishing a Guided Tour

If you used a tour guide system, you'll want to have an area where the guests can return the devices and pick up their ID (if left). Make sure you count the devices back in!

Thank the visitors for coming, and encourage them to come again.

Things Not to Say

Make no political statements.

Tailor your tone to your audience - usually it is a 'family show' and should be kept at that level.

Do not be anything other than polite about other people, such as surrounding employees, or other official bodies - they may be amongst your audience too.

Listen Technologies have a wide range of wireless tour guide systems to meet all requirements. A microphone is simply plugged into a compact body pack transmitter which broadcasts the speaker's voice to the intended audience. Individuals with bodypack receivers adjust their volume control to suit their own needs. So even though the setting might change, the consistent, high quality sound won't!

- Customisation available through a range of convenient microphones, earphones and headphones.
- No limit to listeners/receivers
- Setup within minutes of arriving at site
- Completely wireless/no base station required
- Multiple simultaneous channels allows a number of simultaneous tours or interpretation for foreign visitors

For more information on the Listen Technologies tour guide system or for a no obligation quotation please contact us-

Sound Induction Systems Ltd Unit 24, Mochdre Industrial Estate, Newtown, Powys, SY16 4LE, UK

Web: www.tourguidesystem.co.uk www.soundinduction.co.uk

Email : sales@soundinduction.co.uk **Tel:** 01686 628012