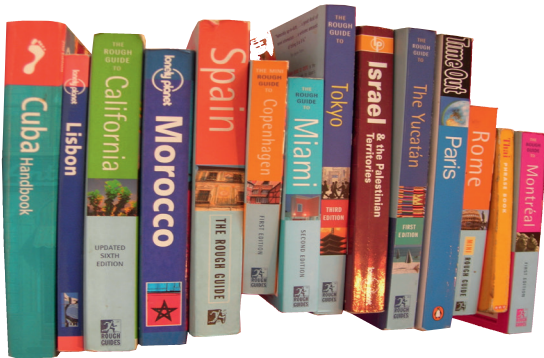


# How to lead a group on a coach

While on a sightseeing tour, tourists usually meet professional people dedicated to taking care of them and to ensure that every aspect of the tour will run smoothly.

These professionals include tour leaders and tour guides: both are experienced people who have been taught to face customers' requests and the many situations that may arise in their job.

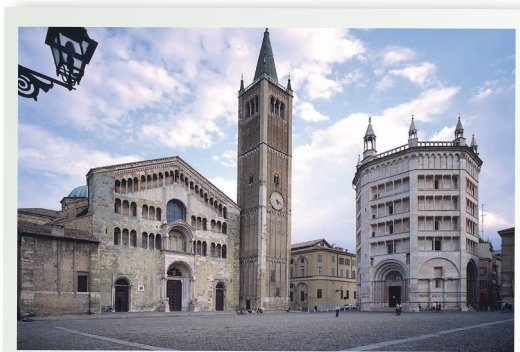


Leaders and guides don't do the same job: **tour leaders** (also called **escorts**) accompany tourists on holiday packages for the whole duration of the programme, while **tourist guides** inform customers about local specific subjects like art, architecture and natural history.

Even if the job is not the same, it is possible to identify the common professional skills that both of them should have in order to fulfil their duties:

1. excellent **communication skills** (mother tongue and at least another two foreign languages);
2. good **organisational skills**;
3. good **social skills** (friendliness, ability to communicate about everyday life subjects too);
4. some **psychological skills** (ability to understand the kind of people in front of you).

Customers trust and rely on leaders and guides even though sometimes they may expect too much from them; however, all in all, the top duty of a person dealing with a group of people is to provide an answer to any request while smiling so as not to betray the customers' trust. On occasions they may have to deal with difficult customers or events like the coach breakdown.



Parma

## What to do

- smile
- find out names of customers and their children
- try and be as interactive as possible
- enrich your speeches with anecdotes
- make your customers laugh every now and then
- appear more "human" to your customers by sharing funny bits of your life
- look at your customers in the eyes
- give customers time to rest
- repeat essential information
- keep clear in your mind the programme of the day
- introduce the driver to your customers

## In case of emergency

- be trustworthy
- provide accurate information (but don't stress its negative implications)
- explain what is happening without making your customers feel insecure
- be positive and show possible solutions
- never let your negative feelings show at all
- keep calm
- try to deal with customers' questions and anger in a professional and polite way
- give an impression of efficiency
- show interest in your customers' needs