

Hotel Industry Can Save Millions Of Dollars Each Year By Organizing Its Virtual Sales Procedures

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The Internet offers many cost effective (even free) resources and tools to forward virtually unlimited sales information to capture prospective business! The industry can save millions by organizing its virtual sales policies, procedures and training

Hotels are losing millions of dollars each year by unorganized virtual sales procedures and the lack of virtual sales training of its sales and catering sales staff! Furthermore the hotel industry needs to start incorporating traditional "Sales 101" selling techniques to its virtual sales procedures to ensure closing new business and giving them the extra edge above there competitors.

The Internet offers many cost effective (even free) resources and tools to forward virtually unlimited sales information to capture prospective business! Web sites are good Marketing tools but they do not provide hotel and event planning sales professionals with the resources and education needed to streamline the service sales process to each sales and inquiry call. Distribution and presentation of your virtual sales material instantly and professionally - while providing personal attention to the guest - can make the difference between the sale and lost business.

Today's full services and limited service hotel web sites have been built to reflect the web designer's technical goals and restrictions instead of the goals and needs of the hotel sales and catering sales professional. Traditional web sites do not provide the virtual tools, knowledge and training hotel sales and catering sales staff members need to close the sale with one phone call. And, increasingly, businesses of all sizes are recognizing that being first on any major search engines costs money. Good search engines ranking is not something that just happens, and the Internet is filled with fraud. The hotel sales and catering sales industry must look at additional virtual options to make web sites a viable sales tool, such as instant virtual presentation of services offered and providing hotel sales and catering sales staff member with cost effective virtual tools needed to closes the sale quickly and effectively, saving both time and money.

The hotel sales industry must start analyzing its cost effective virtual options, organize its virtual sales procedures, train its sales staff and begin distributing and presenting sales information to include traditional sales standards to ensure an increase in profits and a decrease in annual marketing budgets. Further consideration, from a business perspective, must be given to the millions dollars of misdirected revenues in production and postage each year.

Studies have shown that 85% of those who respond first to an inquiry with complete sales information and provide personal attention to the guest will win the business. Complete sales and catering information should be presented within the first few seconds of an inquiry or sales call. One of the first things a Sales or Catering Sales Managers should be asking when receiving an inquiry or sales call is; are you sitting in front of a computer, if the guest is, then this gives the sales professional a visual option for the guest to review as they follow along with your virtual presentation of services. Once the call is completed there should be no need to access e-mails, send attachments, word documents, web links, powerpoints and PDF brochures or resort to faxes and snail-mail to complete the inquiry or sales call (other then a follow up).

Consumers are still looking for personal attention and outstanding customer service in the hospitality sales industry. Simply having a web site is not enough to bring attention or cut cost. Setting policies, procedures

and training on how virtual information is handled and presented for selling guest rooms, facility services and event facilities is key to reducing your annual sales budget and increasing new business.

In the age of computers and Internet, it's easy to lose touch with guests. Quick, easy and up-to-date information is no longer available. In order to find the information they are looking for, guests may have to go to a corporate web site or independent web site and access e-mails, attachments, word documents, links, web programs and PDF brochures or resort to faxes, phone calls and snail-mail. What happened to one-on-one personal attention to help a guest decide on services? What happen to sales 101?

Just because we are starting to live in a virtual world doesn't mean we no longer need personal customer service in the service sales process. Sales 101 tells us the importance of building rapport, educating, communicating accurate information quickly and providing special personal attention above and beyond the competition. This no longer exists with traditional web site service sales and provides no personal attention (instruction/education), which we all know the guest is looking for. The Internet has taken away the personal edge that service sales once had before web site development.

Paper-based sales process and traditional use of web sites also provides no personal attention nor does it help the hotel stand out above and beyond its competitors. The hospitality, hotel and event planning industry must look at its sales material and begin presenting environmentally friendly information while providing virtual sale information under traditional sales standards and providing personal attention to each guest.

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