

Hotel Management
The Sales Clinic
Issue: August 2011
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IS CUSTOMER SERVICE PART OF THE SELLING PROCESS?

So much has been written, and discussed about customer service in the hospitality industry, that it is almost too redundant to write a column about it. Just recently CBS covered it pretty well on its Sunday Morning News Broadcast, with demonstrations on how customers are being turned off by how companies are handling their telephone inquiries. The same subject has been covered in this column a number of times of the years.

When it comes to improving sales in the business of sales productivity, how does customer service play a role? Of course, generally, it does not come in to play much when a sales person is involved during interaction with a prospect; hopefully, that is providing excellent customer service. The issue of negative customer service occurs during times when a sales person is not involved, but when other staff associates play a role. We can truly say that most of the issues of poor customer service has to do with the telephone. This was demonstrated very well in the CBS broadcast

What's our problem in the hospitality business? How we answer the phone (or don't answer the phone)! Automated voice answering devices and the "hold" button are the big part of the problem. It costs a company much less when a call is answered and handled via an automated system than when handled by live people. There does not seem to be a problem when a call is answered by automation, and handled that way to the satisfaction of a customer. However, when someone calls and really needs to speak to a live person to handle an issue, that is when the poor customer service problem really begins. Once we get through the ten button response system, and feel we are finally getting to talk with someone, we are put on hold forever and ever, with continual messaging telling us how important we are.

It is not only the telephone, but in so many other ways we can turn-off people, that it directly affects sales. After all, the whole hotel is the sales department. Everyone, somehow or other is involved in improving sales. Maybe we seem to have forgotten that hotel employees, in all departments, need continual training in customer service. There are so many little things that are important in making guests, and prospects for business satisfied.

There is a new book out called: "54 Golden Nuggets.....the best of The Telephone Doctor",. Written by Nancy Friedman, The Telephone Doctor. Nancy has a Customer Service Training Company, has trained corporate executives and all types of employees on this subject, and has appeared on many television shows speaking on how customer service

relates to business and improving customer sales. She would say that Customer Service IS part of the selling process.

Take a look at Nancy's 54 Golden Nuggets for easy reading and for quick tips on how to cure your business communication skills. www.telephonedoctor.com, 314-291-1012

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