

Hotel & Motel Management
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The Sales Clinic
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TO WHAT EXTENT DO ALL THESE SOCIAL NETWORKINGS SITES BRING IN NEW BUSINESS?

Hopefully, we are all concentrating on bringing back repeat business to our properties. Chances are that if we have done our job on service we will get some repeat business without any sales activity with those prospects. However, some time needs to be directed towards getting some new business to replace those prospects who do not repeat. It appears that a good deal of time is being spent by sales staffers in this business of “social networking” via sites like LinkedIn, Naymz, Reunion, and many others, with the idea of a way to bring in new accounts via the contacts made. Is this really doing the job of sales? Does it work? I am not too sure that all the time spent with sales staffers “working” these sites really does bring in new business. Then again, maybe that is not the real purpose of social networking; if not, how does it really help sales? When we talk about networking, in our business of hospitality sales, isn't it supposed to be making contacts who can lead us via the network to other contacts with whom we may be able to do business? Has anyone measured results? So far we have not seen any firm results reflecting sales published on this.

Right now I, like most others, are pretty well-loaded with time-consuming “network” messages from people who “want me to be their friend”, and join in on their network. As a courtesy, I do respond to people I know, not that I really want to be in their particular network, but if I did not respond, those requesting my being linked to them, may not look upon me with favor. In all cases I have responded with a note back, appreciating their request to be linked to them. So, now what happens” Now that I am linked, what can I do, via my network of contacts, to be of help? Only one person, so far, to whom I am linked, sends me articles which he thinks would be helpful to me. He even suggested an idea for this column. Now, that is a good contact; however, no one else has contacted me again for any kind of assistance. So why did they want me on their network? Think about this; couldn't any of these contacts made, contact me directly via my email address? If anyone

wants me to be their friend all they have to do is send me a note, or make a phone call to me, that would be good networking, without having to be connected via any of these sites.

Where is the new business coming from via contacts made on those networks? Would it not be more productive for users of these sites to spend their time making direct contact with old and new prospects with an email? Also, a phone call to those existing accounts would also work (I know, no one answers their phones anymore, they get use voice mail), but a good percentage will get through.

Sales staffers and managers should start measuring time productivity on these networking sites. Further, measure the productivity of spending the same amount of time in developing relationships via phone calls and email messages. How about spending some time going through old files, and contacting existing accounts on a regular basis? Even reading the local paper, and contacting probable leads for new networking relationships, would perhaps work even better than those networking sites.

It would be interesting to get some readership response to this with information on the value of these social networking sites.

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