

**Hotel & Motel Management**  
**Issue: July 20, 2009**  
**The Sales Clinic**  
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## **RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF THE “SMALL MEETING” MARKET**

Regardless of the size of a hotel property today, it can substantially boost its overnight rooms business, and its overall profitability by focusing on the small-meeting market.

Surveys taken at almost any time in recent history reflect that the most common type of business (or social) meetings involve less than 50 people. In these times of budget cutting, local business meetings off-site, frequently take the place of more exotic locations favored in times of plenty.

While many associations have their annual meetings in large convention hotels, most committee, and board meetings can be housed in smaller properties that may not be in large cities. While these smaller meetings do not fill entire hotels, a block of 10-25 rooms for several nights can be a pleasant bonus, filling valleys in higher demand periods.

Most hotels have at least some space that can be used for meetings. It could be multi-use space, such as that used for breakfast or social hours. It can be lounge that is used only in the evening. It could be a suite parlor or even a traditional room that has a built in hide-away bed. If there is absolutely no space anywhere in a property, there is still the opportunity to partner with another business, adjacent to the property. Many of today's restaurant operations, whether they are chains or locally owned facilities, have separate sections of their stores to meet and feed 10-50 people.

Then, of course, is the issue of finding possible, potential sources for this type of meeting business. The list is extensive, and many are in a property's existing base of contacts. They include a hotel's list of suppliers (right out of the accounts payable listing); the trade organization to which some of the hotel staff belong; local service organizations such as Rotary Club or Lions, etc. Let's not forget all those social networks to which many of the property staff enjoy connecting. A property's staff is

another base for referrals. Think about the groups to which a hotel's staff belongs, such as Parent Teachers Association, garden clubs, condo groups, sporting leagues, churches, and a variety of social groups. These groups have a variety of meetings of their own. However, it is the people involved in all these groups, and the companies with which they are employed that could be the best possible prospects for the small meeting market being sought. It takes some time and effort, but the idea is to work the network.

The whole idea is to get the entire property staff involved in this effort. Have meetings in each department to explain how easy this could be for them to search out their own networks for possible business, and pass on the leads to the property sales department or to the general manager.\

The Sales Department is not the Whole Hotel.....but the Whole Hotel is the Sales Department.

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