

Hotel Management
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Sales Clinic column
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SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO HOTEL SALES PRODUCTIVITY

It sure does look like the “hottest” thing out there today for sales staffers is this business of Social Networking, through a wide variety of types of electronic messaging. No question about it, one sure does make a lot of connections around the world through these media opportunities. Making connections in hospitality sales is very critical to building business, so the question remains: “what is it about making all these connections that really results in new business?” We need to take a look at all the connections and reflect on how many of these could be prospects for business, and what kind of an approach needs to be made that would result in new sales for the hotel properties represented.

One of the important things to also consider is the relationship building with existing accounts to make sure we continue to do business with them. But don't we already do this via our tracing of files that exist on the properties? With a sound tracing and follow up system in the sales office so that staffers are consistently following up with accounts, without the necessity of searching for them or seeking them via any Social Networking process.

When we take a look at sales productivity, we are not looking at sales activity. For a simple definition we can look at Sales Activity as what is it we are doing, what method are we using to become more Productive. As far as Sales Productivity we should be looking at the result....what are we “putting on the books”. Here we look at actual sales...in other words: What is it that a sales person is booking. With this in mind the issue is: “What is it about Social Networking that could make a sales person more Productive?” Here we could be talking dollars and cents or even building of occupancy, but it needs to be something that is Productive....not just the ability of making new contacts.

Of course, some could look at Social Networking as a marketing tool. And, that is OK too...Yes, it would be a marketing effort which we can consider bringing a product to the attention of the public; something like advertising, but of course, it does not cost any dollars like advertising would do. However, it is not “delivering the product for a price” which is what sales productivity is all about. Hopefully, a sale may come about with the appropriate follow up with someone on the network who could possibly be a “lead”....then the follow up would have to consist of a series of questions to determine if this contact could be a prospect. Then, there needs to be a continued follow up with more questions to find specific needs, and responding to those needs with the relating of benefits in meetings those needs. So, is all this done via the social network via their media. Of course not...somewhere along the line real

words need to be spoken between the sales person and the contact. Then, hopefully, we may see some productivity when a sale is made.

This business of social networking can be very time intensive, with not much immediacy of revenue production. It could be considered a component of a marketing effort. There are many more things a sales person can do that would create more productivity with less time activity.

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