

PRODUCT ANALYSIS - A KEY ACTIVITY OF SALES PERSONNEL

When was the last time a sales person, at a property, stayed overnight? It certainly is not unreasonable to expect people who sell things to have the experience of using the product. In the case of a hotel property, what is the product? Of course, the answer is the whole hotel. Experiencing the hotel product should take into account the exposure to all the features. So that means not only a night, as a guest, in a hotel room, but using all the amenities that are available. Taking meals in the hotel food and beverage outlets; experience in the recreational activities available, and all other features, adds to product knowledge.

There is no question about it; sales staffers, in any business need to know everything there is to know about the product they are selling. What sales people need to do during an exercise is to complete a Fact Sheet covering the hotel, for all areas such as: Rooms, Food/Beverage, Meeting Facilities, and other hotel features available, i.e.: Spa, Shops, Parking, Security, etc. Performing such an exercise could be so very valuable to a sales person. Not only knowing all the features, but getting the "feel" of being exposed to them is what is most valuable.

So many different things about a hotel property appeal to so many different people. Spending the night in a bed reflects the real comfort of the mattress, pillows, sheets, etc. Expressing the comfort of a king size bed could be critical in the sales process, for some prospects. Or even something about the bathroom, the space, the shower, the soap, even maybe the quality of the toilet paper, could be of valuable in the case of some prospects. How many sales people know the size of their sleeping rooms; or the real quality of the bedding, or the number of connecting rooms (not adjoining rooms), or the two, three or four, security devices on a sleeping room door? How about the view from the room window? How about space for someone to work on a laptop, and the details of the chair that would be used to do that work? What is known about the lighting in the room; and how does it affect reading from the bedside? Sampling the quality of the individual coffee packets used for the coffee maker could be helpful in some cases.

When it comes to dining services, what do the sales people really know about the quality of the food and service? What is it about the menu that differentiates the property from others. Experiencing breakfast, lunch and dinner is important so that the sales people get real feeling for the quality and environment of the property's dining service. What do the sales people really know about the meeting facilities? This is most critical in the business of selling to groups. It is not only how many people the space can accommodate, but capacities for different types of needs, is what is important. Do sales people really know the quality of the conference table and chairs being used in the meeting or banquet facilities? The comfort of attendees at meetings is critical when it comes to all day workshops or seminars. What is it about the chairs that add to this comfort. Then, there is knowledge of the audio visual equipment available. What about parking for conference attendees? How many parking spaces are available, and what security is available?

The product analysis list can go on and on, covering all the outside, recreational activities, as well all other features and amenities of the property. The key is getting sales people exposed to all this so they really have product knowledge.

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