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Hotel Sales – It's Time to Use Video Email to Outsell the Competition

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Based on what I hear from the hotel sales and catering sales managers I train each month, the vast majority of inquiries for groups, meetings, conferences and catering events are being received electronically. Some come in via direct email; others arrive after a planner completes a "contact us" inquiry form at the hotel's website. Most, however, arrive via third party platforms such as CVENT, Starcite, MeetingBroker, or via the local DMO or CVB. When planners reached out by phone, they tended to inquire at far fewer properties as it took much more effort. Now after a few keyboard strokes and the push of a "submit" button, their inquiry goes out to dozens of hotel sales offices.



As a result, sales managers are overwhelmed with "lead spam" and experiencing "lead fatigue." Non-response rates

messages are mostly cut and pasted from templates and attached as PDF's that contain mostly generic commentary and similar images as all the others.

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Given these business conditions, it is more challenging than ever to stand-out. Although I'm an advocate of placing a phone call – unless the sender specifically says not to – it is challenging to get someone to even pick-up these days if they don't recognize the caller.

Now there is a brand new way for hotel sales and catering sales managers to ensure that their responses stand out from all of the others, and that is to use personalized video email messages.

Until now, using the medium of video was time consuming and challenging. Although has always been easy to record video messages, sending them was another matter. Video files are too large to send as email attachments, so one would have to use a file sharing method such as DropBox. The only other option so far has been to upload videos to platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo and then to send the URL link in an email message, or to embed it in the email. While this can work well for email marketing campaigns sent to distribution lists, the effort required made it impractical for everyday one-to-one sales correspondence.

enable salespeople to easily create and send video email messages show up in the body of the email message itself. Not a link, but the actual video right there, with an enticing "Play" button.

By finding creative ways of displaying the sales prospect's name, (and their company or organization if applicable), the receiver will clearly see that it is a personalized message not a generic marketing video.

Of course, salespeople will still want to respond via the platform on which the RFP was received, and it is usually always a good idea to also send the response directly to the prospect's email address when it is provided (unless specially instructed to reply only in the platform.) However, to get your response noticed a personalized video email can go a long way.

Imagine the smiling face of a hotel catering manager responding to a bride-to-be while holding images of other weddings held in the venue. Or even better, imagine them sending a personal video email from their smartphone on Saturday night as a wedding is being set up, enticing each bride-to-be on their list with a personalized video message saying "Hello Margaret! It's a beautiful evening here as we set-up for another fabulous wedding! Here's a look at what yours will look like if you give us the opportunity to host it!"

Or, picture a corporate hotel sales manager sitting in front of a logo-themed backdrop looking into the webcam and expressing how much they want to host the group meeting or conference.

I predict that this new technology will catch on very quickly, but those who learn to use it to its fullest potential will continue to stand out even once the gimmick wears off. If you a hotelier who would like to receive a sample of how to