



OPINION ARTICLE

13 August 2009

A Sales Self-evaluation test for General Managers

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It is common knowledge and an undisputed fact that general managers at almost any size hotel could take over the sales efforts for that hotel and have the occupancy and RevPAR near the capacity level within just a few weeks.



Well, "almost" common knowledge and probably highly disputable

Having been in both operations and sales at different points in our careers, Howard Feiertag and I appreciate the value and contributions of each. (Howard and I co-authored LESSONS FROM THE FIELD – a COMMON SENSE APPROACH TO EFFECTIVE HOTEL SALES)

Here is a chance for General Managers to examine the other perspective. You are invited to take this little test (without looking at the answers)

1. List your hotel's top 10 accounts, by individual and company name
2. How many in-house guests did you personally talk with this past week? (more than the good morning type of greeting)
3. How many regular guests did you call on the phone last week to say "thank you for using our hotel's services and asking if there is anything we can do better?"
4. How many local community activities did you personally attend the past week as your hotel's official representative?
5. How many outside sales calls did you make with the sales manager last week? If you do not have a sales manager, how many calls did you make alone?
6. What did you do between 11:30 am and 12:30 PM last Wednesday?
7. When did you personally last review sales files and call reports?
8. When was the last sales department/team meeting? Were you there?
9. When was the last time you personally called on the phone a guest who returned a comment card? (positive or negative comments)
10. How many hours did sales staff spend last week in non-productive sales activities?

Some possible responses:

1. Every General Managers should know the top 10. Contacts that the General Managers has may be different from others on staff, but regular networking (at least once per month per client) pays HUGE dividends.
2. Every General Managers should visit with at least five registered guests weekly, at morning coffee, at checkout, the restaurant, the pool, etc. These guests are

3. Again, five is a workable, meaningful number for phoning regular guests.
4. The General Managers is the CEO of your hotel. Every organization, be it the Chamber of Commerce or the Kiwanis, welcomes and values the CEO. Involved CEOs are often a hotel's best sales person.
5. With no sales staff, a General Managers must make 3-5 calls per day on average to maintain, not gain ground. With a sales team, 8-10 calls per week can make a difference.
6. If a full service hotel, an effective General Managers will use this busy time of day to tour the restaurants, visit the kitchen, and perhaps pour coffee in a banquet, which will shock and definitely please most meeting attendees. If a rooms-only hotel, the General Managers should be having at least two business lunches per week. That is what your competitors are doing.
7. This one is not an open and shut case, as there are so many variables. Regular review of sales files is an acceptable answer, but this should be at least weekly, with personal follow-up with the sales manager.
8. Sales meetings should be before 8:30 am or after 5 PM to avoid prime contact and selling time. Successful teams value General Managers who attend, offer support and occasional input.
9. The very small percentage of guests who take the time to tell what went well or wrong need to be TREASURED as resources by General Managers. These people are the heart of word-of-mouth promotion. Call as many as you can – it will be worth it!
10. You know the answer to this one has to be that we have sales staff selling, not going to the bank, to the post office or the bakery. If we are going to steal market share, we need to be selling, not making change.

"The General Manager is the #1 salesperson.

S/he must take part in:

- guidance and direction of the staff
- personal involvement with guests and personnel
- meeting clients in the hotel
- calling on at least one potential client daily"

Bob Durbin, former Executive Vice President, Sheraton
Hotels

(Quote found in Educational Institute's HOSPITALITY FOR
SALE)

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And remember – we all need a regular dose of common
sense.

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John Hogan is a successful hospitality executive, educator, author and consultant and is a frequent keynote speaker and seminar leader at many hospitality industry events. He is CEO and Co-Founder of HospitalityEducators.com , which has more than 2000 resource pages and has become the #1 independent website for hotel owners and managers. He is also the Principal of HoganHospitality.com , which offers hotel expert witness services and hospitality consulting..

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