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How to Become a Better Salesperson in the Hospitality Industry

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<https://hmgmanagement.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/how-to-good-salesman-hotel2013.gif>In the lodging and hospitality industry, it is quite common to have very busy times of the year and also times when business is slow. When a big convention comes to Las Vegas, occupancy rates soar and it can be very hard to find a room. During the period of time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the visitor count to Las Vegas drops and hotel suffer great deals to try and fill their empty rooms.

The job of sales people in the hospitality industry is to proactively engage individuals and groups and get them interested in staying at the hotel they are promoting. It can be hard to figure out how to sell a room in a ski resort when there is no snow on the ground and it can be hard to know how to convince people to use their discretionary income on travel instead of buying a new refrigerator or putting money in their child's college fund.

When you are in sales, you have to focus on the positives that will improve an individual's quality of life. Salespeople in the hotel industry have different styles to achieve their goals of selling more rooms and increasing the revenue of the property or properties they are representing. Following are some good tips on how to be a more successful salesman in the hotel and hospitality industry.

Be able to answer any question

You should make an effort to improve your knowledge about what you are selling so you can answer any questions a potential guest might have. The more informed you sound, the more convincing you can be. If you are talking to someone about the size of a standard room, don't say it is bigger than average. Instead, give them the dimensions and tell them that there is a spacious seating area with a pull-out bed and two chairs.

Guests do not like surprises when they arrive. Share your knowledge willingly, but do not overwhelm a person with minutia. It is okay to describe a few of the best items at the free breakfast buffet, but don't tell them every type of cereal they can get or that there are four flavors of jelly for their toast.

Get Tips from studying the competition

Take tips from the competition. See what other lodging facilities in your area are offering and then make sure you can offer the same or better services. Go undercover and stay a night or two at a popular hotel in the area that is also your competitor.

You may learn that your competitors are providing better service, offering a more appetizing free breakfast buffet and giving guests free Wi-Fi, all at the same price as the property you are representing. While you may not have the authority to make managerial decisions while working in sales, you can certainly offer some tips to your bosses on how to improve sales by making some subtle changes.

Know your customers before making sales calls

While it is a noble thing to try to be everything to all people, in the hospitality industry, such a goal is unreasonable and impossible to achieve. Some people will only stay in a four star property while others who are very budget conscious will look for economy hotels with lower prices. If your hotel caters to the average middle-class traveler, you should not be trying to get millionaires to stay with you.

Be honest and genuine with your customers

It is an art and a skill that is hard to perfect, but the best sales people are able to establish a relationship with their potential customers and not make it seem like they are selling anything. You have to let the customer control the situation and make the decision on whether or not they want to stay at your property.

Don't be like an over-aggressive used car salesman and try to point out the obvious features in an average room. Give people credit for not being stupid. If you are offering rooms for \$50 per night, they know that they are not getting the softest and most luxurious bedding or more than a modest breakfast buffet.

People respond much better to a soft sell and if you can establish a friendly relationship before asking them how many nights they want to stay. Let them tell you what they want first and then let them know how staying at the property will fulfill those needs.

Improve your prospects by using social media

While face-to-face sales calls and phone calls give a salesman the best chance for personal interaction, using social media can expand your potential number of prospects that you can call. If you know how to develop interest in the digital world, you can reach a wider audience. Qualified leads are hard to generate, but developing relationships through an online presence makes the job a little less difficult.

Focus on your task at hand

When some people try to sell, they become overly talkative and never let the potential purchaser get more than a few words into the conversation. One of the smartest things you can do to improve your success rate is to listen. You are not presenting an ad. Selling is much more than a monologue. You should focus on having a real dialogue so you can truly understand what the person on the other side of the table wants.

It is fine to be social and even relate a short story to gain the customer's trust, but you should always maintain focus on the number one objective which is selling that room.

Make sure your targeted customer remembers you

Salesmen and saleswomen have to deal with a lot of rejection in their line of work. You should not take it personally. Many times, your first call does not close and you have to call back several more times. A good salesperson in the hospitality industry will do something to distinguish themselves and their property from the competition.

For instance, if you offer guests free slippers or present them with special chocolates, bring some of those items along to leave with your potential clients. An attractive female salesperson can make a lasting impression just by showing up in a nice dress, but men can also dress fashionably so they will be remembered in a positive way.

Special offers for special people

One of the sure-fire tips for salespeople in the hospitality industry is to provide deeply discounted rooms if clients visit at a certain time of the year. Gaining corporate business is much easier if you offer lower rates for a company that books at least 50 or 100 rooms with you in a year.

Follow through and thank your guests

Without question, the best customers you can have are repeat customers. It takes a whole lot more effort and also costs more to acquire a new customer than to keep one that has already been to your hotel. To retain customers, always send them a thank-you card or other communication shortly after their stay. You can tell them that you were thrilled to have them as guests and offer them a special deal on a future stay. Give guests a reason to come back, and they will.

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