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# LET'S GET BACK TO THE REAL SELLING MODE TO BUILD BUSINESS

To some extent, because of the economy, unemployment situation, less people traveling, companies cutting back on meetings and travel expenses, owners and operators of our hotels are most concerned about a drop in occupancy and average daily rate. However, there is another issue, and that is the fact that about 200,000 new rooms are in the market place, resulting in an overbuild in many areas of the country. Were it not for the new rooms, perhaps our situation may not be as bad as it now appears. There are still folks out there traveling and attending meetings. What our management people have to think about is doing better with their market share. Occupancy around the country may very well drop about 3%-4% or even more in some areas, but that tells us that there is still business out there for the taking.

What we need to do is get back to the real selling mode to maintain, and build market share.  Sales people need to spend more time prospecting for new business to replace the business that might have been lost. For a number of years, up to recent times, business has been good, and to some extent, it has just been the opportunity of doing business by just answering the phone, and sales people getting busy by doing things other than sales. It is just an opinion, based on what been said about what sales people have been do with their time, but only about 50% of their time has been on pro-active sales. Many sales people claim they are being hampered by some time-consuming activities beyond their control that prevent them from spending more time selling pro-actively. Right or wrong, it pays to take a look at some of these activities to determine where more time might be converted to selling pro-actively.

It seems once we got into the electronics mode of maintaining records and reports that it would eliminate paper-work. In many instances it may have created

more paper-work. One of the big issues that concern sales people is the number of reports they have to complete, and submit for management and corporate offices.. Now, new computer-driven, automated sales account systems, such as Delphi, and others, reports needed by management should be available by accessing the system. There is no reason why management cannot gain access to a salesperson's activity; number of bookings, revenue generated; tracing lost business; call reports; letters written; proposals and contracts sent.  It is all there in the computer. Why should sales people have to spend so much time putting out these types of reports?

Another time consuming issue is about sales people involved in the servicing end of the business they have sold. Why do they have to be around to make sure everything "goes well" with the business they have booked, when there is other staff taking care of the details?

Let's start working with the sales staff to help them spend more time in going after new business to replace any business that has been lost. That means doing a good job in prospecting.  Leads are all over the place, starting right at the property via old files, reservations departments, front office operations, accounting department, and other property associates. Just by checking the local paper every day will turn up large amounts of leads. Keep Sales People Selling!

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