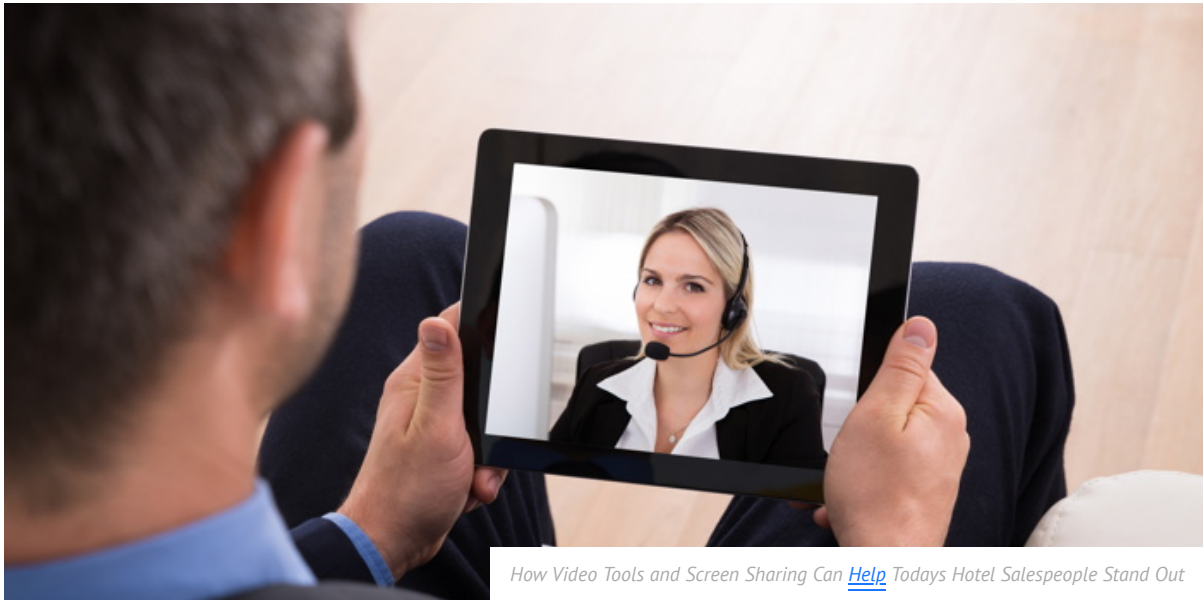


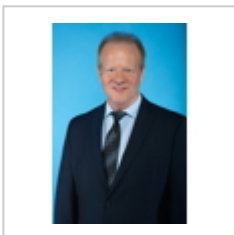
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HOW VIDEO TOOLS AND SCREEN SHARING CAN HELP TODAY'S HOTEL SALESPEOPLE STAND OUT - BY DOUG KENNEDY

🕒 April, 12 2018 ✍️ Doug Kennedy



How Video Tools and Screen Sharing Can [Help](#) Today's Hotel Salespeople Stand Out



In the 2010's we have witnessed a transition in group bookings to electronic conversations, as an increasing percentage of meetings, conferences and events are being booked without there being even one voice call between buyer and seller. While there is still human engagement needed to finalize contracts and details, sales is increasingly a depersonalized, transactional process done via direct email (to 'sales@hotelname.com') or via correspondence that takes place in online portals.

In the currently strong economy, most salespeople seem to be content with simply responding electronically. In other words, if the lead comes in by CVENT they reply in CVENT, if email, they email back, and if it comes in through a channel such as a CVB portal or Wedding Wire, they conduct all correspondence there.



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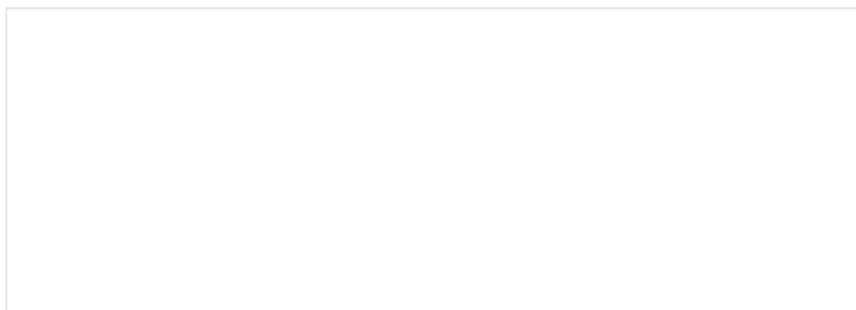
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Being in the business of conducting hotel [sales training](#), I often take a deep dive into the sales systems and processes that are being used as part of my pre-training assessment. I trace actual leads from arrival through the electronic exchanges, until it is lost or won. Besides noticing that most salespeople only communicate electronically, I also find that most are following-up only one time after responding, and many don't even follow-up at all.

When ask them why this is the case, the most common response I get "Well, if she wanted to talk on the phone she would have called in the first place." Another justification I hear is that today's prospects are often third party planners and "all they want to hear is the price." If that is the case, we should all just hang up our hats and allow hotel meeting space and room blocks to be voice apps such as Siri, Cortana and Alexa who work 24/7/365 basically for free.

As I often say in my training workshops, "If you wanna get as much business as everyone else gets, do the same things everyone else does." In doing so you will be "good" at hotel sales. Right now, the way the economy has been for going, being good seems to be good enough. Yes, sales goals are being reached, but if you ask me this is most often only due to an increase in demand.

On the other hand, true sales superstars know that "good" is **never** good enough, and even in up market they strive to be great every time, with every lead.

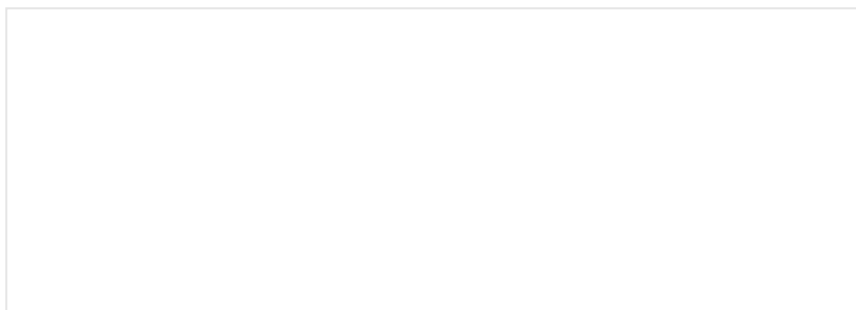


What sales leaders should be doing is encouraging the use of hi-tech for old-school, hi-touch engagement. After all, we are in the hospitality business, not the "room rental" business, right? Yet when I work with hotel sales teams, I usually find the latest hi-tech tools already in place, yet utilization is low.

One example is the option to add a video component to sales proposals. Many are using electronic proposal platforms such as Cendyn's eProposal and Blue Buzzard's Proposal Path which make it easy to record and include personal email messages. Yet I rarely see this being used. Similarly, these tools allow the hotel sales managers to customize the images and informational links that are included with proposals. Yet most of the time the salesperson [includes](#) the same standard images in each template and also all of the standardized links to information, even if irrelevant.

If salespeople are not using an electronic proposal system, they are instead sending back a response in a PDF format that includes an extensive proposal running 10 or 20 pages long, apparently not considering that the sales prospect is going to be overwhelmed when they receive the same style proposals from the all the other hotels.

As a remedy, sales leaders should be providing training that is applicable in the real-world circa 2020, because those are the years we will soon be booking, if not already.



Instead, too many sales managers are still being trained exclusively on in-person communication skills, "using open-ended probing questions" and "feature-advantage-benefit" selling concepts that I was training people on in the 1990's.

Here are training tips from our KTN hotel sales workshops that will secure more business by using technology to stand out in a crowded field.

- Embrace video messaging. When I talk about sales videos, most think of the slick, polished, high-budget ones that are put together by marketing or an outside specialist. It's nice if your hotel has professional videos at its website and on its Youtube channel, but what I'm referring to is even better: one-to-one personalized video messaging.

All one needs is a web-cam and tri-pod; there may be one on your [laptop](#) but that is probably going to shoot you at a bad angle. You can purchase one at Amazon or elsewhere for well under a hundred dollars and a few bucks more for professional lighting. You will use this in several ways. First, if you have eProposal and ProposalPath/BlueBizzard, always record and upload a short video message.

- Use your new webcam for video email messaging. In very recent years there are now a few inexpensive platforms on which one can record personalized video email messages directly for each prospect. These are wonderful to send in addition to the traditional textual emails and platform responses in CVENT or The Knot. They imbed the video right into the message (no link required) and it's much more likely to be viewed. (Email me for a sample doug@kennedytrainingnetwork.com.)
- Use screen-sharing tools. Most hotel salespeople simply send a proposal and say "call if you have questions..."; and a few say "I'll give you a call to review this..." The best response is "I'm in my office tomorrow between 3pm and 5pm and the day after between 9am and 11am, so respond with a good time for us to connect to review this..." When they respond, send over a link for an online meeting using a tool such as join.me (which is free), GoToMeeting, WebEx, or one of the many others. When you start the meeting, just power-up the webcam. Stand in front of your hotel logo and hold a white board with the prospect's name written on it.
- Conduct virtual site tours. If you have an iPhone and the client does as well, you can use facetime to walk them through. If not, you can use Skype or many other platforms such as Twitter's Periscope or Facebook IM. Or purchase a GoPro camera and walk them through the [tour](#).
- When using these tools, you can also bring in your support staff such as guest services managers, the chef, conference services staff, and other personalities to say a quick hello.

These are but a few of the ways in which we can stand out from the others in the market, who are most likely to be simply emailing back with a proposal or uploading a document into a platform.

- Doug Kennedy
- April 2018

About Doug Kennedy

Doug Kennedy is President of the Kennedy Training Network, Inc. a leading provider of hotel sales, guest service, reservations, and front desk training programs and telephone mystery shopping services for the lodging and hospitality industry. Doug continues to be a fixture on the industry's conference circuit for hotel companies, brands and associations, as he been for over two decades. Since 1996, Doug's monthly training articles have been published worldwide, making him one of the most widely read hospitality industry authorities. Visit KTN at www.kennedytrainingnetwork.com or email him directly doug@kennedytrainingnetwork.com.

Doug is the author of "So You REALLY Like Working With People? - Five Principles for Hospitality Excellence." https://www.createspace.com/6608751?ref=1147694&utm_id=6026

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