



HSMAI is committed to growing business for hotels and their partners by fueling sales, inspiring marketing, & optimizing revenue.

The Hotel Sales Manager of the Future: Talent Recruitment and Management

By Robert A. Gilbert, CHME, CHBA

Talent is consistently mentioned as one of the biggest challenges of hotel companies today. This is especially true for hotel sales managers. And one size does not fit all when it comes to the unique needs of a hotel or its market. How should you recruit or develop successful sales managers of the future? Or if you're a sales manager, what do you need to do to hone your skills to maximum your productivity or success? Read below for insights from a gathering of vice presidents of sales and marketing of hotel management companies.



It takes a village of sales and marketing executives to predict the future. That's exactly what happened with sales and marketing executives from nineteen hotel management companies converged at an HSMAI Executive Roundtable and leveraged their front line knowledge of the challenges associated with the emerging job descriptions and needs of hotel sales managers in today's rapidly changing - and demanding - landscape.

The group reviewed perspectives from various points of view on what are the critical attributes necessary for success and developed unique guidelines for four different types of hotels:

- Select service
- Full service (suburban)
- Full service (urban)
- Independent hotel, resort, and/or luxury

For each hotel type, the focus group prioritized attributes, common challenges of sales managers today as well as how they believe that sales managers should be measured. The group then identified key attributes and challenges of "seasoned" and "unseasoned" sales managers. A summary of the group's thinking outlined below.

While not a scientific research process, the attributes, challenges, and measure methods summarized from the work of the group provide suggested guidelines that any company can use to reinforce or develop recruitment and training criteria for their sales teams. And sales managers, take note. Are any of these attributes ones that you can develop further to enhance your productivity and career?

<i>Hotel type</i>	<i>Top three Attributes</i>	<i>Top Challenges</i>	<i>Measurement</i>
<i>Select Service</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Desire to find business and manage relationships 2. A self starter 3. High energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training/Mentoring needed • Time Management coaching • Privacy - need a productive and motivating work environment • Access to productivity tools - including laptop (communications), tablet (sales presentation tool), virtual sales/marketing materials • Market share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face time • Saturation of existing accounts • Generation of new & incremental business

<p><i>Full Service Urban</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competitiveness and desire to win 2. Positive attitude 3. Result oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misalignment of incentives with desired results • Demotivation that's bound to come if they turn hourly given new legislation pending • Lack of personal connection due to prevalence of eRFPs and email • Align incentive to total revenue value of customer (a step toward GOPPAR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market share with a pure competitive set
<p><i>Full Service Suburban</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resourcefulness 2. Resilient - have a "can do" attitude 3. Tenacity & competitiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the customer or decision maker • Incentive plans - we need to simplify and streamline the incentive plan the work flow • Lack of leadership or coaching on property to drive the two challenges noted above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team first approach - hotel profitability
<p><i>Independent/Resorts/Luxury</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proactive business development ethic 2. Business intelligence acumen 3. Relational - these product types typically have a long sales cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success sales managers at this product type represent a unique talent pool; selling skills must be at highest level • Be able to operate without enterprise systems or processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary metric is booking goals that are unique to the property

<i>Type of sales manager</i>	Attributes	Challenges
<p><i>Seasoned</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive • Positive attitude • Extreme creativity • Ability to network • Knowledge of the business and understanding of it • Ability to develop new skills • Experience with different economic cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to develop broader skills in marketing, RM, and overall • Balancing their time • Non-selling duties - being tied down • Adopting to technology & the pace of business • Keeping them engaged and recognizing their contributions
<p><i>Unseasoned</i></p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive attitude• Energetic & hungry for business• Teachable & open minded• Willing to learn• Hungry to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ramp up time• Cost• Team acceptance• Translation of hotel terms• Onboarding process• Lack of patience - theirs and ours
--	--	--

A special thanks to sales and marketing executives from the follow hotel management companies who participated in this HSMIAI Executive Roundtable: Atrium Hospitality, Charlestowne Hotels, Coakley & Williams Hotel Management Co., Destination Hotels, Hospitality Ventures Management Group, Hotel Equities Group LLC, JHM Hotels, John Q. Hammons Hotels & Resorts, LBA Hospitality, Midas Hospitality, Pillar Hotels & Resorts, Prism Hotels & Resorts, Real Hospitality Group, Remington Hotel Corporation, Shaner Hotel Group, TMI Hospitality, Vista Host, White Lodging Services Corporation, Windsor Capital Group, Inc.
