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1 SALES TECHNIQUES

1.1 Personal Sales Calls

- a) A professional sales executive should have complete product knowledge, knowledge of the hotel, all marketing programs and sister hotels in the region/area.

- b) Sales executives should carry sales tools with them and be prepared to present them as they investigate and find a potential client's needs.
 - 1. Such sales tools include brochures, rate tariffs, meeting room diagrams, and banquet menus on their own hotel, directories, material on group rates, the guaranteed range of rates.

 - 2. Each call (whether by phone or in person) should result in the following information: (5W's) Who, What, When, Where and Why of meeting planning for each department in the client company.

- c) Basic Investigation uncovers:
 - 1. Individual Rooms Business: locate person(s) responsible for making in-bound and out-bound reservations for each department of the company. Also ascertain the volume and frequency and facilities needed and level of accustomed accommodation.

 - 2. Local meeting room needs and food function requirements: frequency, when, how far ahead, who plans, what size, special needs, exhibits, with and without guest rooms.

 - 3. Provide Incentive Programs: Weekend plans – offer local weekend/holiday package plans, to have client experience hotel facilities.

 - 4. Names and Titles: of all other officials in the association or company who control or have some need for hotel space, so personal calls may also be made on them.

 - 5. Scope of the Organisation: local, state, regional, national. Send regional and national information to Regional Offices pertaining to the information.

- d) In the course of qualifying a prospective account's needs, a professional sales executive must have that most important basic sales ability – how to ask for business. They recognise that: **NOTHING HAPPENS UNTIL A SALE IS MADE**. You must ask for the business before the sale is made.

- e) Once the business is booked, professional sales executives accept their share of the Sales Department's responsibility to insure a high level of smooth and efficient servicing of all functions so that additional business from the same account can be secured for their own and other hotels.
- f) Qualifying solicitation is followed by continuing solicitation of identified active or prospective accounts.
- g) It is very important to schedule continuing solicitation on prospective and active accounts to keep your hotel and its facilities in the minds of the decision makers. If you don't, your competition will.
- h) After the sale is made, you must service the accounts. The greatest single reason for loss of established business is some form of NEGLECT.
- i) Personnel change, policies change, needs change, and you must keep on top of all accounts to be able to re-sell and remind regularly. Even if there should be few changes at accounts, continuing solicitation is good public relations to remind each account that you still want their business.

IT IS RARE THAT ANY ACCOUNT HAS TO STAY AT MILLENNIUM
– YOU HAVE TO MAKE THEM WANT TO!

1.2 Telephone Sales Calls – General

- a) Telephone sales calls can be used to advantage in various ways, including:
 - Qualifying prospects and setting up appointments
 - To obtain additional information prior to a personal visit
 - Public relations continuing solicitation where previous qualifying investigation has shown that potential volume of business is low
 - Re-activating inactive accounts
 - Responding promptly to guest comments
- b) Telephone calls are in three basic parts

1.3 Pre-Cal Planning – First Step

- a) Set your call objectives in writing. For Example:
 1. Establish the criteria you will use in qualifying the account's potential: Rooms volume monthly, food and beverage needs, meeting/functions space needs, etc.
 2. Determine why an account became inactive – from your files, knowledge of other on the staff, information of public record.

3. If responding to a client's letter of complaint, investigate circumstances prior to calling. Be honest, not defensive.

b) Prepare your Opening Statement

1. Why you are calling, your reason must be customer-oriented, not "you" oriented. Your customer doesn't buy a sleeping room or function space, as such. He buys what your services can do for them.
2. Selling by Telephone requires even greater emphasis on appealing to the customer's selfish interest than in-person sales, where gestures and your expression can convey a great deal.

c) Prepare your Sales Message

1. List fact-finding questions: to qualify the prospect, to update your information on the customer, to know what the client needs, etc.
2. Make your questions "open-ended": ones that cannot be answered with just a yes or no.
3. Stress benefits over features: Don't just tell the client what your hotel's physical plant offers, but how these can help a meeting planner, a function arranger, etc.

1.4 The Telephone Call – Second Step

- a) Identify yourself (first and last name) and your hotel. Say them slowly, distinctly and proudly.
- b) Establish rapport.
- c) Make an interest-creating comment (remember the client's selfish interest).
- d) Ask your fact finding questions.
- e) Deliver your sales message.
- f) Overcome any customer objections:
 1. Confirm your understanding of the objection by rephrasing it.
 2. Answer the objection.
 3. Stress a benefit to the customer.
- g) Close the sale. Use forced-choice questions, i.e., Not "When may I call on you", but rather "Would Monday at 03:00 p.m. or Thursday at 10:00 a.m. be more convenient for an appointment"?

- h) Wrap up the sale.
1. Summarise (briefly) what you both have agreed to.
 2. Where appropriate, arrange for the next contact.
 3. Express your thanks and get off the line.

Important Note: Always let your client hang up first. You know when you're through talking, but your client may have a last-minute thought. Local "phone power" courses on improving telephone sales techniques are offered by the phone company in your city.

1.5 Follow-Up – Third Step

- a) Complete a call report.
- b) Trace next contact where appropriate.
- c) Do what you have said you would.
- d) Where appropriate, send a brief letter recapping the conversation, supplying promised information, etc.

1.6 Sales Letters

- a) A letter should be used to confirm any and all discussions, conditions or agreements concerning the sale.
 1. A reader file should be maintained by the sales office for review by the General Manager.
 2. This is a chronological file of all out-bound correspondence from the sales department.
- b) Remember that competition for the time and attention of the individual to whom you are writing is extremely intense.
 1. He will remember – or pay attention to – only those letters that say something important to his needs in a clear and succinct manner, brief but not abrupt.
 2. Successful letter writing can make a significant difference in your productivity and the effectiveness of your staff.
- c) Basic hints to better letter writing:
 1. **OUTLINE YOUR THOUGHTS BEFORE YOU START TO WRITE OR DICTATE. MAKE NOTES.**
 2. Avoid elaborate phraseology – write as you would talk.
 3. Answer all questions directly.
 4. Convey interest and sincerity.

5. Proof read what you have written before you mail it – put yourself in the reader's place and examine what you have said.
 6. Be enthusiastic but honest – don't exaggerate.
- d) Letters of Confirmation (Tentative/Definite)
1. List all elements of the sale in detail. Include rental costs of equipment, etc. If you have questions, ask them.
 2. Create a check-list of what to review with the client and subsequently to cover in your letter of confirmation.
- e) Form Letters
1. The place for form letters is to a group where they all have a common interest, etc.
 2. Form letters should not be used to contact a mixture of markets nor in direct solicitation of a specific association, company, etc. they turn guests off because they do not appeal to the specific guest's needs. Such form letters are counter-productive.