

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELLING TECHNIQUES IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Effective sales monitoring provides the manager with a host of important information that helps him to have a realistic insight into the customer, which is the company's most important category of business partner. Therefore, learning as much information about the target audience of current and potential customers will enable the manager to find the right approach to both reward existing ones and address the new ones and communicate it to the team. In-depth customer knowledge will enable the company to offer, now and in the future, a customer experience that will lead to greater brand engagement, brand awareness and, ultimately, sales. Equally, the information obtained helps to modify products or services marketed to meet customers' needs as much as possible and to reduce problems or failures that may arise from signing the contract until delivery of the contract product or service.

Keywords: selling techniques, hospitality industry, selling management, tourism management, tourism selling points

1. Introduction

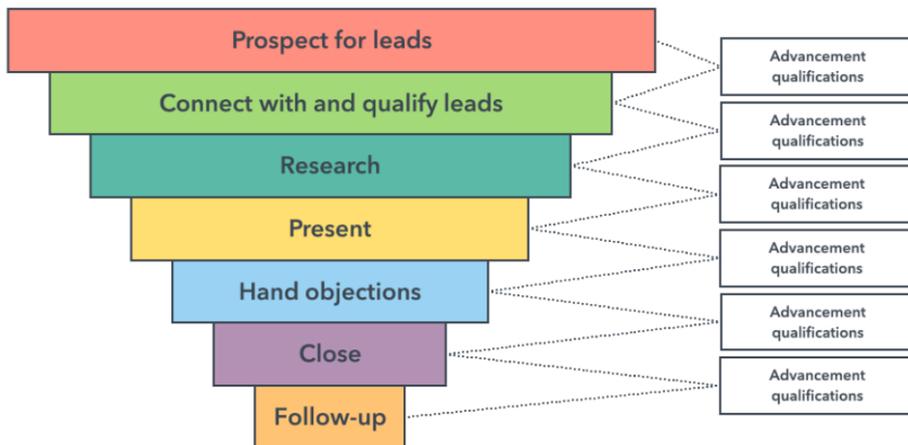
Knowing and implementing some suitable sales techniques is a vital ingredient for success in sales. In simple terms, techniques for effective sales and negotiation are a mixture of talking to the right people and listening carefully to figure out what they want to buy. Good sales techniques include anticipating and managing all the reasons why a customer chooses not to buy, better known in the sales environment as "objections." The sales techniques should include the ability to see when a customer is ready to buy and when to

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end the sales process. Sales techniques often focus exclusively on getting sales. But knowing when is the right time for a negotiation is just as important.

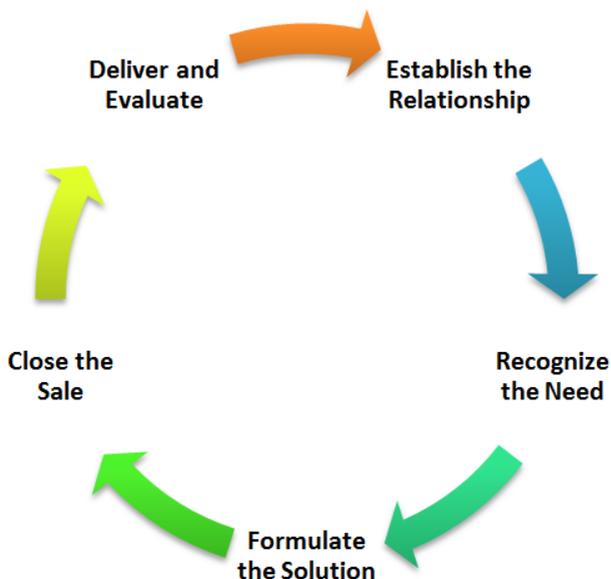
Figure 1. The sales process pyramid



2. The importance of up-selling in the hotel industry, front-desk situation

The upselling tactics used at hotel reception have increased their importance in recent years largely due to the changes that took place in the room booking procedures. A well-coordinated upselling program can be of benefit to all parties involved, if it is done correctly. The upselling tactics used at hotel reception have increased their importance in recent years largely due to the changes that took place in the room booking procedures. The popularity of on-site reservation on a third-party tourism site, the hotel's website or airfreight package and / or car rental makes it often the person at the reception to be the first person with whom the customer comes into contact throughout the whole acquisitions. This trend gives the receptionist the opportunity to become an active member of the sales department by selling more value-added services to clients when they are present at the reception. Through upselling techniques, the hotel maximizes customer revenue and gets an average daily rate (ADR) increase.

Figure 2. The cycle of selling services or products



Selling higher value services can benefit the hotel, the receptionist, and the customer if a well-coordinated quality management system is implemented in advance. The benefits the hotel enjoys is greater customer satisfaction and higher incomes. Pros active upselling strategies can make a good impression from the start, no matter the size of the hotel establishment. One of the most common mistakes when implementing an upselling program is to have the primary purpose of increasing revenue. That's because in this case the client's experience is almost always suffered. Instead, focus must be placed on the client and his comfort. When the agent is trained and stimulated to improve customer experience, the upselling sales will come in on itself.

Again, since receptionists are often the first contact customers have with the hotel, it is critical that the receptionist provides hotel-related customer information on topics such as comfortable accommodation, appropriate packaging, or different room types guests. Most frequently, tourists say that receptionists rarely strive to recommend another type of accommodation than the one already booked. On rare occasions where the agent really recommends something else, this is a very transparent attempt to "get more money" from the customer. There is no link between the recommendation and the client's needs.

This approach can be very demotivating. The first step towards successful upselling is a change in focus and presentation focus; the main concern should be the customer and sincere concern to meet the customer's comfort needs.

Agents need to learn to recognize and anticipate customer needs and also need to have the necessary knowledge on the products so they can offer informed suggestions on a more comfortable camera option. For example, if a person travels with children and has reserved a standard room, the agent can tell the client that they would feel more comfortable in a room with children's space, so parents do not have to have a sleep schedule from 8:30 p.m.. Or maybe a person staying for a long time would consider the option of a bigger room as valuable. Many times customers do not fully understand the full range of available rooms and options, and the situation should be addressed in an informed and helpful manner to the customer, never in a despondent tone or making negative remarks about the room already reserved. Again, the goal is to maximize customer experience. Once an upselling program is implemented, it is essential to have a tracking system that measures the results and impact of the program and leads to the correct distribution of bonuses. Tracking systems will vary from one hotel to another due to the different existing post-marketing surveillance techniques on a case-by-case basis, but there are some issues that should be universal. The system should be transparent and easy to understand by the receiving agent. The incentives should be paid after the customer has checked out and after the customer's payment has arrived. The number of upselling sales, their average value and their total value should be tracked for each agent as well as for the whole team.

Traditionally, receptionists were considered the first line in terms of hotel services. They deal with customer requests, complaints, oversold, and fulfill the promises made by sales managers. Consequently, when employing receptionists, management seeks individuals with qualities such as diplomacy, self-confidence, charisma, and often steel nerves. These qualities are of great use to a receptionist. However, the changing landscape of hotel reservations has made it necessary for new receptionist skills, such as the ability to sell efficiently. Agents need to be well trained how to identify the customer, use the right language, estimate the customer's willingness to buy in addition, identify the right promotional packages and promotions, as well as the right price quotations. Although they may seem daunting at first glance, upselling techniques can bring indisputable rewards: more satisfied customers (which means that the rate of return will be higher), higher hotel incomes and better bonuses for the agent.

A well-managed upselling program can benefit all parties involved if they are designed and applied correctly. To stay efficient, it is necessary for the hotel to be able to adapt to the changes that take place in the hotel industry. There is a delicate balance between quality customer service and quality sales that, if done correctly, can lead to a remarkable success of the upselling program. Appropriate training and an energetic reception team will create the right atmosphere for an upselling program to deliver results with a high return on investment.

3. Sales people in the hospitality industry: a key responsibility

Every situation in which a sale takes place is unique. It is influenced by the products or services that are sold, the sales conditions, the characteristics of the buyer and those of the seller. The latter must react differently each time they meet a potential customer, adjust their methods to the requirements of the situation they want to close a sale. Whether the salesperson is looking for new clients or maintaining relationships with old customers, it can always happen that in order to complete a sale, they need to value other qualities. Once you have to prove your charm, another date of intuition, another time of flexibility. That's why the salesperson needs to have many qualities, many skills to know, and if he does not, he has to acquire them. The issues that the assessment of the personality and psychological traits needed by a salesperson raise them are complex and a description of the "ideal salesperson" has not yet been achieved. Therefore, it is very difficult to find a perfect concordance between the particularities of the sales activity and the personality of those who work in this field.

- **Intelligence** offers the one who has been endowed with it the ability to quickly and well understand a problem, to grasp what is essential to it and to find it resolved on the basis of past experience. Not only can intelligence be the most important of the qualities a salesperson has to possess. A smart salesperson will be able to get out of any difficult situation where, sooner or later, he will be in a discussion with a potential customer. He will always know how to avoid a potential conflict that would have a negative impact on his work and the image of the organization he represents. An intelligent person will be able to learn in a short time the characteristics of the products or services he is going to sell. It will highlight these features and present them in a unique, self-designed way. It understands you more easily what are your business strategies, organizational forms, pricing policies, and how to promote both your business and your business. A

smart sales agent will be able to understand the results of your marketing activity and adapt them to every customer and every situation they face.

- **Sociability** is an essential quality for the salesperson because he can know other people every day. If it is not a sociable person, who likes to communicate, to interact with his fellow men, it will be very difficult to convince potential clients. During a meeting, the discussion may deviate from the main topic, namely the product or service that is wanted to be sold. If the agent will not be able to hold a different discussion on another topic, the relationship with the potential client will be very cold and the possibility of closing the sale will be reduced. Also, the presentation of a product must be interactive. The agent should ask questions, listen to the answers of the potential client, formulate conclusions, and finally convince them. If the meeting happens, the salesperson, even if it does not complete the sale, will be able to find information about the potential customer, which he can use in the future.

- **Self-control**: It is ideal for any man to have complete control over his mind and his feelings. A sales agent has no time to straighten things out and can not afford to make mistakes. Any mistake, any weakness can be sanctioned by the potential customer. The salesperson must always know what he has to do, he must not act impulsively at any time. Self-control is one of the qualities that can be enhanced with increasing experience. It is normal for us to lose ourselves when we are put in a unique hypostasis, in which we do not know how to react. It is also logical that when we are in a situation similar to one that we have passed through before we can keep calm. It is very important for the salesperson to master his feelings, because only in this way he can make a claim to master the feelings of the potential client.

- **Self-confidence** gives the salesperson the ability to self-help. Trust in your own forces is a way to determine your thinking to help achieve the desired goals. This quality stimulates positive thinking and motivates the salesperson. If you think positively, the salesperson will look forward to his future with confidence and will easily pass over the failures, as "everything will be fine". By its way of looking at things, it will be much easier to keep the audience's attention, and its presentations will reach their target in a high percentage. Even if success is not guaranteed, surely the customer will be happy to listen to other salesperson proposals whenever he asks for it. At the beginning of the activity in the field of sales or in any other field, self-confidence may be low because of the fact that many

people are reluctant to new, to change. However, after a shorter or longer time, depending on each individual, the confidence in their own power to succeed in this area will increase or decrease. The most important contribution in this respect will have its first positive, positive or negative results. Most of those who start this activity will quit shortly before they are fully convinced they are not made for sales. Generally, people with self-confidence, optimistic people, can be evaluated by tests, but it is more difficult to assess whether they are suited to sales agent activity. Instead, people who have low self-confidence, pessimistic ones, will be doing very little in this area.

- To be successful, a salesperson needs to **adapt continuously**. Sales are a dynamic, ever changing field. If sales agents do not keep up with the change, they will have to abandon. Also, a salesperson, to be successful, should be able to sell anything. In addition, potential clients can work in any field, they can be more or less cultured, more or less intelligent, they are part of different backgrounds, have diverse personality. For each of them, the salesperson needs to evaluate and address it in the most appropriate way.

- **Imagination** is a quality without which a salesperson will find it very difficult to succeed. Generally, intelligent people also have imagination. Imagination gives the salesperson the opportunity to anticipate the various situations in which he / she will be with a potential client, of course, based on the knowledge gained in the past. Thus, anticipating the behavior of the potential client in the different sales phases, he will be able to build a plan that will give him the opportunity to answer any questions and objections. Imagination is all the more useful as the experience is poorer. Every sales agent, throughout his career, is put in more or less difficult situations, from which he learns. If, for some reason, he misses a sale, in the future he will be ready to eliminate as possible this reason. Imagination is the one that allows the salesperson to put himself in the customer's place, to fully understand his needs and desires.

- A salesperson who is not interested will have no chance of succeeding in this area. **Enthusiasm** is a strong feeling for a cause or thing. An enthusiastic sales agent will be passionate about the activity he is doing, will be free of fear or doubt when he meets a customer, as he will be almost certain about his success. An enthusiastic person will be devoted to his cause, so he will do anything with pleasure, he will have an internal force that will be pungent for the one he will be talking to. Therefore, armed with

a positive attitude, a salesperson will be able to conclude more sales and move much easier over failures. Equally morbid is the lack of interest, the negative attitude of looking at things.

- Since about 90% of total sales do not end at the first date, returning to potential customers is required. The sales agent must understand that if he hears a NO, he already has a sign that the potential buyer is interested in his product or service. A NU can start a discussion where the agent presents his product or service and persuades the potential client. Also, the agent must always return to the potential customer. Most people are reluctant to buy from sales agents. They live with the impression that they want to fool them. Therefore, at first they will say no, but if the salesperson does not abandon, ask questions, will continue the discussion, people will open and give him time to present his presentation.

- Not only can any salesperson be trained in how to show their merchandise and how to approach their customers. But his training is general, not necessarily appealing to particular cases. By embracing these general principles, the salesperson has to define its own way of acting. He will have to use his intelligence and imagination to identify the multiple situations he / she might be surprised during a sale and then, depending on how he will appreciate each situation, he will make a plan. To implement the plan, you will have to take the initiative. He will not be able to advise with his boss or after addressing the potential customer. He must always know what he has to do. Arriving in front of the client, if he misses the spirit of initiative, he will not be able to choose the right time to complete the sale and will not be able to negotiate the sales conditions. He will make his presentation as it should, but the moment of closing the sale will be chosen by the prospective customer if he will buy. Additionally, negotiation sales conditions will be most favorable to the customer, as the agent will not be able to face the customer, leading the discussion.⁸

- Certainly, unscrupulous people can succeed in sales as a salesperson, but sincerity is needed to maintain relationships with their own customers. Usually salespeople who are lying to their clients will never return to them. They simply fool them to complete a single sale and then leave, not finding it. They, in many opinion, are more scammers than salespeople. A true salesperson has to fully satisfy the customer and think ahead. A satisfied customer can also be approached at a later date and, in addition, can also tell the acquaintances of his acquaintances. So the earnings are much higher for the honest sales agent. Perhaps, in the short term, he will sell

less, but whenever he can return to his clients to present them with other products.

4. Technology and BIG DATA – competitive advantage in the hotel industry for the selling process

The upselling and cross-selling techniques are not new. However, as noted by different studies, hotels have been slow when adopting strategies that airlines use from low-cost companies and may create profit margin margins. Especially taking into account the two elements highlighted by industry professionals as essential to compete in the future: to provide customers with attractive and unique experiences, and to connect and interact with them more fluidly. Both elements are the basis for any upselling and cross-selling strategy that only technology can improve, according to industry studies, which cite concierge applications for smartphones and tablets (concierge applications) that drive the way the hotel is approaching by the customer's mobile phone its catalog of services, also facilitating its interaction with the staff.

The term Big Data, or holistic and intelligent data management, has become a very popular subject in the hospitality industry, although according to data management specialists, very few hotel units know what the real advantages and proper use of so-called Big Data. Big Data helps create a client's central profile, which contains data from many sources and makes the guest "transparent". With special software programs, hotels can keep in touch with guests at all times. An increased frequency of communication with them will increase the chance to return the client to the hotel and be taken into account when making the decision to book a room. What is currently the exclusive benefit of Online Travel Agencies (OTA) will in the future be the preferred tool of hotels, so that the direct booking rate can be increased or at least stabilized. Big Data means connecting all relevant information sources. This requires either the development of complex interfaces in the hotel information system or the consolidation of data providers. For a company that uses Big Data, it makes no sense, for example, to use an outsourced system for newsletters or satisfaction surveys. All loyalty, up-selling or cross-selling programs, as well as voucher delivery, must be done through a centralized system tailored to the needs of the hotel. This consolidation allows for the creation of a useful database that will reduce the number of paid hotel service providers as well as administrative and license costs.

Yield management is not new in the hotel industry, and offering different rates for a room, depending on the customer profile, is a successful practice that

has been used for years. Big Data offers hotels the possibility to customize the offer in the smallest details, thus leading one step ahead of the management system. In addition, the potential for doing so is even greater as there is a massive increase in booking sites as well as hotel reviews such as TripAdvisor or Yelp as well as the uninterrupted expansion of social media networks. By adding to our own hotel CRM systems or loyalty programs, the amount of data that can be used to optimize management revenue is enormous. According to industry studies, the hotel chain Marriott uses Big Data to estimate the optimal price per room in order to increase the occupancy rate. Marriott does this by using improved revenue management algorithms that can analyze large amounts of data much faster by combining the different available sets. All relevant customer information and consumer behavior are then passed on to decision-makers.

5. Conclusion

With today's competitive and demanding market, sales leaders feel the need to increasingly analyze the needs and abilities of their sales teams in order to hire the best sales people to put into practice the elaborated strategy. Putting into practice is often the weak link in the relationship between aspirations and results, and the gap between the sales strategy and its execution continues to grow. Companies have to cope with a multitude of ever-increasing and diversifying factors from better-informed buyers and increasingly sophisticated demands, involving a larger number of stakeholders in the acquisition process, and last but not least, to the challenge of remaining different and visible in a continually uniformized market.

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