

ROOM SELLING TECHNIQUES

Reception as a sales department...

The sales function has become an important and vital part of front office work. With more and more companies entering the hotel and catering field, the public now have a much wider choice, so it is essential for an establishment to present an attractive and economic product.

The consumer must be persuaded to buy the product and this factor of front office work has influenced the training and selection of the reception staff. The receptionist must be capable of making a sale, since front office efficiency is judged on selling success. Sales techniques can be learned, although without a doubt some people will; have more flair for work.

Although the marketing strategy will usually be devised by senior personnel, it is the reception staff who will implement it. So it is important that front office staff should be aware of main objectives of marketing a hotel. To plan for a point of sale front office, a front office staff must promote other profit centers of the hotel. This planning includes setting objectives, brainstorming areas of promotion, evaluating alternatives, drawing up budgets, and developing an evaluation tool for feedback.

Some of the goals for the front office as it adopts a sales department attitude include the following:

- Sell rooms to guests who have not made a prior reservation
- Up sell (encourage a customer to consider buying a higher-priced product or service than originally anticipated) to guests who have made prior reservations.
- Maintain the inventory of the product i.e. the rooms.
- Convey information to guests about the other products available for sale at the property .for example food and beverages. The objective of front

office is to sell all available facilities at the hotel to the guests. Front office staff is probably the most important means of letting guests know what services are available.

- Ensure that maximum revenue is generated from the sale of rooms by striking a balance between overbooking and
- a full house
- Obtain guest feedback

Up selling rooms

The front office assistant should be confident and business like when making suggestions. Rarely does a clerk quote minimum rate. The preferred approach is to provide guests with a choice of rates.

1. Know the product
2. Control the encounter. Ask specific questions such as “we have a quiet double room in our club floor. Is that suitable for you?” avoid vague, open ended questions such as “what kind of a room are you looking for?”
3. Sell high, but avoid high pressure selling techniques
4. Always quote the full rate plus tax
5. Turn negative aspect of a room or rooming situation into an advantage for the guest. For example, a room without
6. a view becomes “quiet room”. A room near the elevator may be busy but quote it as handy and easily accessible.
7. Sandwich the price between descriptive phrases. For example” one of our extra rooms at Rs 7500 plus tax, overlooking the park”. Or quote the price of more than one room, giving the guest a choice,” we still have double rooms for Rs 6500 but the ones with new minibar are RS 7500”.
8. Ask for the sale. Once all information has been presented to the guest, the front office assistant must gently but resolutely close the sale.” if

that is a suitable choice may I ask you to sign the registration card?" is an effective way to move negotiations to a close.

9. Listen to guests' conversational comments, "wow what a hot day. I could do with something cool." they will help to determine their needs better and to sell other services of the hotel: "our poolside bars are open..."
10. Sell the whole hotel by making suggestions for dinner ("just dial 5 on your room phone to make a reservation") or for drinks in the lounge ("the new entertainer is fantastic!"), or for recreational facilities ("there is no charge for the use of sauna").
11. Try to anticipate guest's' needs and offer services, suggestions and assistance.

Brainstorming areas for promotion

When developing a program to increase front office sales activity, the front office manager in conjunction with other departments should identify as specifically as possible, the hotel products and services to be promoted. A typical outline of promotional areas would be as follows:

1. FRONT OFFICE

A. Reservations

1. Up selling when reservation is placed
2. Additional reservation during registration and checkout

B. ROOMS

3. Upgrading of reservation during registration
4. Promotional packages
5. Office rentals

6. Movie library rental
7. Computer games for children

C.SECRETARIAL SERVICES

1. Photocopies
2. Dictation
3. Typing
4. Fax transmission
5. Laptop computer rental

D.PERSONAL SERVICES

1. Baby sitting
2. Shopping malls
3. Bell staff assistance with luggage and equipment
4. Concierge
 - A. theatre/music/art tickets
 - B. general tourist information
 - C. tours of the area
 - D. airline reservations
 - E. emergency services
 - F. information on local transportation

FOOD AND BEVERAGE DEPARTMENT

- A. Restaurants
 1. special menu items for the day
 2. signature menu items
 3. special pricing combination for diners
 4. reservations
 5. gift certificates

B.ROOM SERVICE

1. meals
2. party service
3. snacks
4. beverage/ alcohol

C. Banquet service

D. Lounge

1. specials of the day
2. special theme of the day
3. featured entertainer
4. promotional package

GIFT SHOPS

- A. Emergency items
 1. Clothing
 2. Toiletries
- B. Souvenirs
- C. Promotional sales in progress

HEALTH SERVICES

- A. Swimming pool
 1. Availability to guests
 2. membership/gift certificates
- B. Jogging paths and time of organized daily group runs
- C. Health club
 1. Availability to guests
 2. memberships/gift certificate