



Sales Tips

Every vertical has its own quirks, its own idiosyncrasies. The more you understand what makes each business special, the better you can sell to it. Use this guide, in conjunction with the product sell sheet also provided, to better understand the challenges and opportunities in the hospitality industry. You'll be better able to offer solutions that make a difference while helping customers manage more efficiently and market more effectively.

Industry Insight

- Uses technology for email marketing to reach previous guests and business customers
- May have a website showing rooms, scenery, features and/or services
- Logoed print products appear in lobby, sleeping rooms, dining areas, etc.
- Flexibility of services and availability – remember this is a 24/7 business
- Small properties tend to be more price sensitive
- Averages 1 to 200 employees
- Typically automates payroll
- Offers seasonal specials/promotions
- Appreciates the convenience of a single-source solution and the ability to service multiple departments and locations
- Trust, reliability and responsiveness are critical to building the relationship
- Custom solutions are important so they stand out, e.g., notepads, promotional items, flyers, brochures, etc.
- Staff identification is important to guests, e.g., uniforms, apparel, name badges, etc.
- Sensitive to space and storage – offer inventory control and short runs more frequently

MARKET INCLUDES

- Hospitality – Hotels, Motels and Lodging (Local/Regional)
- Convention Centers
- Restaurant & Drinking Establishments

Related Markets:

- Event Planners, Transportation Companies, Travel Agencies, Destination Management Companies and more

DEPARTMENTS

- Front Desk/Bell Stand – valet, laundry, registration, operator
- Housekeeping
- Food & Beverage – bar/lounge/restaurant
- Guest Services & Reservations
- Concierge
- Security (depending upon property size and location)
- Marketing
- Accounting
- Sales/Convention Service/Catering
- Equipment and AV Support

How This Market Grows

- May be a seasonal business where growth is tied to weather or local/regional events and attractions
- Personal services and events at reasonable prices for guests and businesses
- Reputation within the travel industry and Chamber of Commerce affects growth
- Full-service offerings – may expand services to remain competitive within the area
- Marketing opportunities will vary based upon the events, offering, meetings and/or availability of extra services, e.g., pool, gym, meeting rooms, etc.
- Growth through acquisition and expansion of locations
- Cross-marketing/promotion, e.g., rack cards to promote the accommodations, amenities, services, etc.
- Repeat business & referrals – including online reviews

Peak Buying Periods

- Major seasons depending upon the location, e.g., beach, snow, etc.
- Holidays – ALL
- Conventions and local events that drive tourism, e.g., Indianapolis 500, etc.

Probing Questions

- How many hotel/motel properties does your company have?
- How do you promote your property, e.g., tourism bureaus, Chamber of Commerce, etc.?
- How do you promote the services you offer to new guests/customers?
- Do you have an active reminder campaign for guests that have stayed with you before?
- Do you offer a loyalty program for your repeat guests/customers?
- Who is your target market? Do you offer accommodations for businesses and families?
- Do you promote your facility within the community for meetings/events?
- Are you affiliated with any professional organizations or local companies?
- How do you promote your services, e.g., tourism bureaus, Chamber of Commerce, etc.?
- How often do you change your service offerings, room rates, menus, etc.?
- Do you offer catering and meeting services?
- Do you offer seasonal specials?
- Do you offer gift certificates?
- Do you use a uniform service?
- How do you like to work with your suppliers?

DEPARTMENTS (continued)

- Maintenance/Engineering
- Business Center
- Exercise/Gym/Spa
- HR/Training
- Event Planner (depending upon property size)
- Gift Shop (depending upon property size)
- Transportation/Shuttle Service

MARKET IMAGE

- Clean, safe environment
- Desire to be the destination point – provide an experience/ atmosphere, e.g., home away from home, exotic, adventurous, spa resort, etc
- Strive to create an enjoyable service experience
- Concern for word of mouth related to service quality, their reputation, the trust of guests/customers and promoting themselves

SALES TIPS

Probing Questions (continued)

- What software applications and versions do you use?
- How do you verify inventory levels?
- How do you currently process payroll?
- How do you handle your filing space?
- How do you handle your taxes?
- Do you give guests promotional items, e.g., pens, notepads, slippers, robes, etc.?

Sales Approach

- Contacts depend upon the size of the property: General Manager, Director of Sales, Food & Beverage Manager, or Guest Service; if multiple locations, a Regional Manager
- Stay up to date on local and regional events
- Approach a full season ahead of peak times, e.g., approach in February/March for summer campaigns
- Focus on the welcoming nature of the facility, lobby, sleeping rooms and dining areas
- Present yourself as a professional solutions provider
- Be flexible about appointment times and locations; be prepared
- Be prepared to meet and walk the grounds in a smaller facility
- Uncover their positioning goal, e.g., family, business, etc., in order to meet their needs
- Be creative and cost-effective
- May have a busy season – look for items that can be used for more than one season
- Food & Beverage Department meetings should not be scheduled during lunch hours (11 a.m. - 2 p.m.), as it will be difficult to get their undivided attention
- Services or Front Desk meetings should not be scheduled during the morning hours

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

- Health and safety
- Payroll issues
- Tax issues
- Food and beverage inventory
- Employee turnover
- Marketing – quick and easy
- Very competitive
- Multiple shifts – 24-hour service
- Heavy reliance on repeat business and referrals
- Seasonality/tourism

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