

The ABC of Sales in the Hospitality Business

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Have you ever heard of the three p's (3Ps) rule? If yes, then you are a sales person. In each industry — and hospitality is no exception — "people," "product" and "price" are the keystones of business philosophy.

A certain number of international hotel brand names are already represented in Moscow, creating healthy competition. This situation compels hotels to fight for their clients. The market economy pushes hotels to survive, but it is only possible when they follow the 3Ps rule.

First, a sales person should be confident in the product, be aware of the brand philosophy, property advantages, its selling points, and the marketplace; even the temperature of the water in the swimming pool is sometimes very important and should be addressed for potential clientele.

Second, a sales person should recognize advantages and disadvantages of other hotels in the local market that are direct competitors. He or she should know the competitor's number of rooms, their banqueting facilities and restaurants' capacity.

Rack rates, special packages and promotions, group agreements, travel agency commissions — everything connected to the "price" is also a key issue, and at the end of the day influences a lot the hotel's revenue results.

But "people" remains the most important and valuable asset to a sales person in any market.

Professional connections and recognition mean professional trust and mutual benefit in the long run. I strongly believe that it is correct to put "people" in the first place in the 3Ps rule.

People make business with people, and if this connection has been installed you are a successful sales person who brings value and respect to the market.

Who do we sell to? Moscow is a business destination, and 70 percent of Moscow hotel guests are businesspeople. Oil and gas, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, fast-moving consumer goods, telecoms and other industries are doing business in Russia, and quite successfully. These industries provide Moscow hotels with the majority of their business. But be careful, you work with very experienced and demanding guests who are paying quite a high price for Moscow hotel services, if comparing Moscow with other international markets. Pay attention to the level of services in your hotel — they should be outstanding! You are a sales person, but you also should follow trends. Talk to your guests and pass along all requests to the hotel management. This is the best way to learn, create and develop new hotel services and sell them. New IT technologies, security issues, bedding comforts, even decoration trends should be considered to make your sales process successful.

Location, location and location... Look around, you have so many office buildings neighboring your hotel. Do not go far away. Knock on the door, and you will see how many guests want to potentially book and stay at your hotel, but have no time to call you for a reservation. Be patient, sometimes it takes years to penetrate the market. But if you are patient and follow the 3Ps rule, you will get there.

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