

5.1.1 Banquet Sales and Marketing Approach

ABOUT BANQUET HALLS

Banquet halls are a classic choice for events. Thus, owners and managers of these venues often have an easier time than nontraditional spaces when it comes to getting people through their doors. But whether business is slacking or steady, there's always room for improvement.

Catering sales people use a number of different strategies to sell food and beverages. While most catering sales results from conventions and meeting sold by the properties marketing and sales office, catering department sales people in mid-size to large properties are responsible for selling to local meeting planners and other local clients in conjunction with marketing and sales office staff.

Highlight what makes your space unique

No private event space is the same, so take the time to let your customers know what you can offer them that others can't. If you can, include both empty venue photos and event photos filled with people on your website and social channels so customers can envision their party at your venue.

Whether it's a stage that can host a live band or your location that has a killer view of the skyline, capitalize on that unique element and run with it.

Anything that highlights character and personality with - example bulbs, exposed brick walls, and signature bar tops etc.

Go after repeat business

Strategy for booking repeat clients is fairly simple — it's to provide such a phenomenal level of service that clients have no desire to go elsewhere.

The easiest way to increase your bottom line and boost banquet sales is - Work smarter, not harder.

Send past customers who booked with you this time last year an email and see if they'd like to start a tradition by doing the same this year.

You can even offer them an incentive, like a free bottle of Champagne or a small discount.

This also helps customers who may be scrambling to find a venue for their annual corporate event or holiday party.

Show off your event menus

Whether your private event space offers food in-house or you work with caterers, make sure to mention that to your customers.

If hotel has a restaurant, include examples of your special event menus on your website. If you work with outside caterers or have a preferred caterers list, consider linking to their menus or sites so they can get a feel for those offerings as well.

Prospects almost always ask about food options when they tour venues so having this information easily accessible will make the booking process that much faster.

Make your clients feel special

You are not just in the business of managing stellar events. You're also there to tend to your client's needs to ensure their event goes off without a hitch.

Everyone likes to feel special, so what's something creative you can offer your clients that will encourage them to have their banquet in your space?

Example - One way that we do so is by allowing our clients have access to our "Treasure Room", which is a room filled with decor items that can be incorporated

into their events if they desire. The Treasure Room has candles, vases, and other decor props that our clients can use free of charge.

Don't be afraid to ask for referrals

However big the private events industry may seem, it's actually a pretty small world. That's because there's a lot of networking involved when you work with potential clients and vendors.

Take advantage of these professional relationships and ask for business referrals from both vendors you trust and happy clients through email or in person.

Getting guest feedback, taking advantage of social media, and asking for online reviews can help spread the word about your business.

Most successful and long lasting method of marketing has been, without a doubt, word of mouth.

Make the booking process easy for clients

The easier it is for someone to book an event at your venue, the more likely you are to close the deal. Event management software plays a vital role in increasing banquet sales.

Clients should have a platform for hosting events to send and receive proposals, make payments and communicate with clients — all in one place.

Planning an event can be a daunting task so try to make our process easy for the client.

STRATEGY FOR HOTEL BANQUET MANAGER TO INCREASE SALES

❑ Whenever possible, identify who your staff should be, then hire and train accordingly

A main responsibility of a Banquet Manager is to achieve customer satisfaction at banquet events and build loyalty to encourage repeat bookings. This means hiring and training a GREAT team.

Banquets are often the most profitable segment of many hotel food operations and staff attentiveness can be the make or break point.

As attendees, we all remember the challenge of receiving coffee, or trying to claim a pre-arranged vegetarian or other entree. We remember the frustrations do we as banquet management include sensitivity training in our efforts so that OUR banquet staff can be the exception?

❑ Be the "host" as appropriate

Our favorite successful hometown independent restaurant will usually find the owner or manager at the door welcoming each guest individually.

While banquets do not have the same style of operation, many successful banquet managers at full service hotels welcome guests, along with the individual who arranged the event.

Having someone visible in management acting as the "host" or sometimes, problem solver insures small issues do not escalate.

❑ Update the "small touches" regularly

Both banquet spaces and hotel restaurants should be high touch.

Use of flowers, interesting table settings, a welcoming entrance at the front door and tasteful holiday decorations can all distinguish your hotel.

❑ Ensure great food presentations

The best Banquet Managers have excellent two-way communication between the kitchen and serving staff.

Even though there may be several hundred of an entree served at one sitting, each dish should look special to each guest

There are many established practices to make this happen at no extra cost other than training.

❑ Embrace Reasonable Care

This may sound very unusual to discuss reasonable care in banquet service and management, but practicing it in all areas of food service is important.

Paying attention here can be essential, as there are so many different types of food service, including buffets and service in non-traditional areas.

Focus on ideas relating to care of furniture, buffet service, china, flatware, glassware and general operational practices.

❑ Share the messages of cost containment

The people who work in our hotels today are intelligent professionals who understand that higher costs at work lessen their opportunities for raises or other benefits.

Effective banquet managers create a master communication plan with the F&B Director and Executive Chef to share logical and equitable ways for everyone to understand cost containment.

- ❑ **Proactively strive to build positive working relationships through teamwork and clear communication as a member of the hotel management team.**

Banquet Managers at large hotels are likely to have one of the larger staffs and should be a regular Manager on Duty.

Banquet Managers must execute company and/or franchise programs and resolve daily operational problems through consistent monitoring of banquet operations.

This includes compliance with safety and security regulations, and the best possible level of service, quality and hospitality.

- ❑ **Embrace responsibility for both long and short term planning, as well as day-to-day operations of the banquet section.**

Banquet Managers should recommend procedural changes if needed, and keep an eye on the department's operating budget guidelines and performance.

Banquet Managers should coordinate with catering sales managers and event budgets to maximize revenue, while providing quality guest service.

This includes regular scrutiny of banquet event orders.

- ❑ **Communicate effectively with customers, managers and associates to ensure that all room setups, equipment, supplies, staffing and menus meet/exceed customer's expectations.**

Two-way communication is the key to effective delivery of service.

The expression holds true that the only thing worse than a trained staff that leaves is an untrained staff that stays to service your customers.

Satisfaction does NOT mean loyalty. We need to build customer loyalty and training is the key. When you serve hundreds of people at group settings each month, the opportunities to excel are enormous.

❑ Be Professional as appropriate.

Making your banquet service special need not be a challenge, and the most critical distinguishing factor is ensuring your team consistently provides excellent customer service EVERY meal.

There are many other responsibilities for banquet managers including reviewing schedules, equipment and supplies and organizing workflow.

A professional banquet managers need ongoing knowledge of the principles and practices within the catering, food and beverage and hospitality professions.

The ability to make occasional business decisions guided by established policies and procedures are supported by solid communication skills.

❑ Thank you - come again .

This one often makes or breaks the final impression of the person who booked the event and is likely responsible for payment.

The final check delivery or guest signature can be a small thing, yet can be critical, as it is likely the last impression.

The owner or manager is often at the door personally and saying.

5.1.2 Banquet Sales - Sales Techniques

Developing Leads - Referrals

Referrals can be huge for getting business.

You wouldn't want to push event guests during an event, but have business cards available.

If you are using menus at an event, make sure your contact information is listed somewhere.

Developing Leads - Social Media

Social media is the new normal. It's where most people do a large amount of communication.

Each social media platform can have different opportunities for collecting leads. On Facebook and LinkedIn, you can run lead generation ads for small fee.

These types of ads have forms attached to them. When someone clicks on a fun banner you create, they are then prompted to enter their information.

Developing Leads – EMAIL

Everyone has email these days, and most people have more than one account.

You may be asking yourself, "How do I get these people's email addresses?" It's not as hard as you may think, and there are many ways you can go about doing it.

One, is at network events. Make sure you collect all the business cards or contact information you can, and input them into a database following the event.

Second, you can purchase a list of email addresses. Companies for this are everywhere, but sometimes their pricing can be a little high.

Developing Leads - SEM/SEO

SEM is search engine marketing

SEO is Search Engine Optimization.

Both can be quite complicated and you can overspend if you don't know what you're doing.

SEM and SEO are newer concepts for generating leads, but they have many great resources that sales team employs.

In-Person soliciting

Contacting the owners of businesses frequented by members of a targeted market segment.

Example the catering director or a catering department sales person may call on the owners of jewelry stores, bridal boutiques or photography studios for wedding business referrals.

Property tours can be used in conjunction with an outside solicitation program to promote the property to local corporate sources and civic organizations whose members can provide future business.

Telephone Soliciting

Selling over the phone in walls far less time than in person visits. If the catering director has hired or sales oriented staff, the staff can make most of these calls, freeing the catering director to other duties.

Ideally or telephone solicitation will result in a tentative reservation or an appointment to discuss the event.

Sales Letters

Commonly used by sales office to solicit out of town Conventions and meetings business, while the catering department usually writes personal letters to solicit local business.

Sales letter should be written with the prospective client in mind and the format should be such that it can be customized based on the company with the name, date and other required other required details.

The letter should attract the prospects attention, create an interest in and then a desire for the product, and give the prospect means to take action.

Sales Letters

After meeting or an interview a thank you letter conveys your commitment to the service and may result in additional business.

Sales letters, thank you letters, confirmations of bookings, and annual follow-up letters can be developed and stored on the computer to be personalize later for individual clients.

The next tips to developing leads would be response to inquiries in the form of written, telephonic or in-person inquiries.

Selling to Clients

- Empathize with the client. The client perceives certain element of risk, the client may be inexperienced and concerned about the impression they would make on their business contacts or guests. On the basis of - Quality of food, cost involved (hidden cost) and if something goes wrong it's the sales manager's job to become a consultant and problem-solve.

- Establish a personal relationship with each client in order to turn the negative concerns into positive expectations. Example a client is staging a regional dinner and wants to impress company officials maybe more concerned with the menu and the type of service than with the cost. The catering director could meet the needs of the client and increase banquet revenues by suggesting different levels of service.
- Give alternatives, the client will often 'trade up' especially if alternatives, are presented as answers to specific needs. Example the client is likely to choose the regency service, as he has already expressed an interest in impressing company officials.
- Suggestive selling or up selling can be used in all situations whether the client concern is for upgrade or budget service. Prospect who are looking for bargain can be offered centerpieces, candles, fancier desserts and so on, In place of discounts on established prices. Maintain the perception of value not by dropping prices but by offering something special.
- Another way of selling is to offer a tour of the facilities, preferably when the ballroom or an appropriate function room is set up. It is far easier for the client to picture a successful event if he or she has seen the facility, decorations and a table service that will be provided.
- Since new business is difficult to come by, catering department rely heavily on past business clients who know the product and are satisfied.

5.1.3 Banquet Sales - Planning and Manage Functions

PLANNING THE FUNCTION

Detailed Planning

Once a date is confirmed the sales must work with the client to plan the function. Emphasis should be shifted from sales to service.

Focus on providing, dependable, timely service of food that is well presented in a setting that meets the clients expectations.

Department attention to detail ability to handle last-minute request and crisis efficiently.

Client should be able to relax and feel like a guest instead of feeling like a host.

This will increase customer satisfaction and help generate a repeat business and positive reference.

Checklist

Properties use a banqueting/ catering checklist to ensure that all requirements are met for both meetings and food and beverage functions.

This checklist can be used for telephone and in person contacts and helps in building client confidence in department's thoroughness as well as provide instructions for proper management of the function.

Menu:

A well designed a menu featuring tempting dishes is one of the important sales tools printed on durable paper, easily readable, user-friendly, listing prices of each item.

- Know Your Guest Profile
- Know Your Guest Preferences
- Provide Menu Choices
- Anticipate Special Needs
- Incorporate Seasonal and Fresh Items
- Consider Ethnic or Regional Menus
- Select a Menu that Fits the Event Schedule
- Consider the Final Presentation of Food and Beverage

Types of Service :

An important planning decision is the type of service to be used at food functions. The kind of banquet services selected influences pricing, staffing and the overall effect of the function.

- Russian Service: Served from latter on large dishes, and sufficient food for one table is placed on each platter. Large labor force is required.
- Buffet Service: Suitable for all types of meals informal breakfast to formal dinner is served in silver chaffing dishes.
- French Service: Items are prepared table side from Gueridon trolley or cart.

- Preset Service: First course (cold soup, salad or appetizer) is set on the table before guest sit down, in some cases the desserts may also be present.
- A la carte: from the menu.
- Beverage plans: Properties may use one or a combination of the following popular beverage plans to provide alcoholic beverages.
- Cash bar also called no host bar, each guest pay's the bartender for his own drinks.
Host bar guest do not pay for the drinks the host pays for the consumption of the guests.

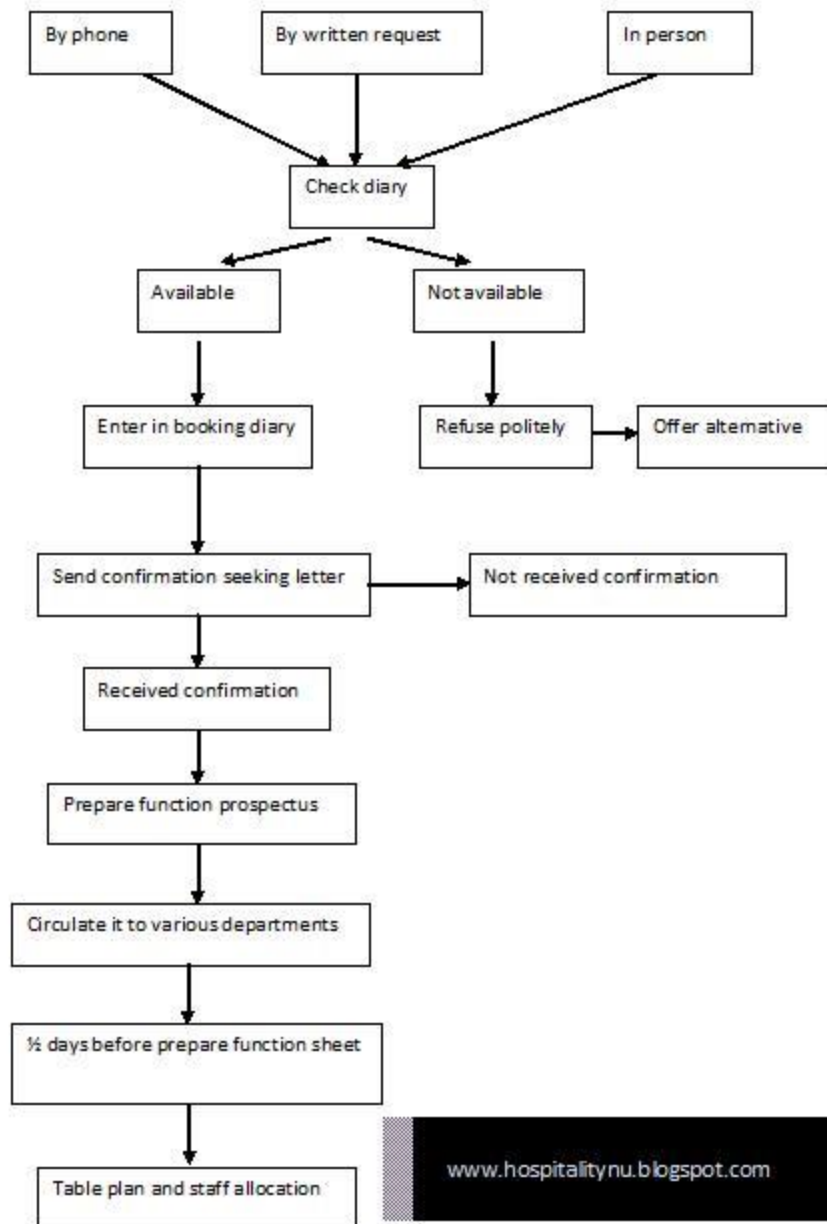
Finalizing arrangements:

- The catering all sales person must complete a banquet event order, also called as function sheet or banquet prospectus.
- The sheet acts as a contract for the client and servers as a work order for the catering establishment.

INITIAL BOOKING

1. File is maintained and all discussion points noted in the file
2. Provisional booking made in pencil in the function diary
3. Date time of function ,number of attendees ,type of function is noted down
4. Whether our banquet is free or not and capacity to be checked as well
5. Most imp is client's budget we offer choices within the budget
6. We share standard menu ,rates and photographs of the event

Banquet booking procedure



During booking the function the following points are to be noted:

- Date and time of function
- Host's name/organization and his/her contact number and address
- Type of function
- Number of people to attend the function (expected and guaranteed number of guests, deadline for confirming the guaranteed number of guests)
- Venue of the function (name of the function hall) or outside the premises

- Price per head
- Menu: Vegetarian, non-vegetarian, special dietary needs, if any
- Method of service
- Alcohol
- Extra charges for any facilities requested
- Requirement for rooms

After taking down the basic information, more points should be decided on the following, depending on the type of function and the budget:

- Any special requirements, such as LCD, computers, screen, collar mike, cordless mike, podium, rostrum, lectern, etc.
- Changing rooms
- Services of photographer and videographer
- Floral decor for the tables, rooms, and reception area
- Security services
- Internet facilities
- Special lighting
- Car parking
- Music and dance floor

After taking down all the necessary information, the banquet department may inform the host the following.

- Advance payment: It is collected for confirming the booking. The amount collected varies from hotel to hotel. Some collect 60 per cent and the others 75 per cent. At times, some do not collect any advance if the hosts are regular guests.
- The dates for final settlement of the bill—Final settlement may be insisted either on the same day soon after the event or after two or three days depending on the type of function and the host. This should be clearly communicated to the host
- Mode of payment: It should be finalized—cash, card, or through bank.
- Function cancellation fee: The amount and deadline date of the function cancellation fee should be finalized.
- Date for final inspection by the clients.
- Date for finalizing the number of guests.
- Chargeable services and facilities.

- Billing will be for either guaranteed number of guests or actual whichever is higher.

Function prospectus or function contract sheet (sample)

FUNCTION PROSPECTUS FORM			
F.P. no	Function contract	Floating date	
Day	From date		From Time
Function	To date		To Time
Venue			
Hosted by		Booked by	
address		Address	
Contact no.		Contact no.	
Guaranteed number	Receipt no.	rate/person	Hall charges
Advance	Receipt no.	Date	Payment mode
Menu		Style of service: buffet	
		amenities required	charges
		flower arrangement	
		accomodation	
		changing room	
		place cards	
		special lighting	
		toast master	
dietary needs		list of toasts	
		LCD	
		computers	
		screen	
		collar mike	
		podium	
		tostrum	
wines		lectern	
		photographer	
		videographer	
		secretarial services	
		soqn posting	
		press release	
		security facilities	
		internet facilities	
cigars and cigarettes		special lighting	
		copier	
		printer	
		stationary	
food pick up at		car parking	
service time		music and dance floor	
		cabaret	
copy to		other services	
FBM			
FOM			
EHK		total amount	
chief			
controller			
engineer, security			
signature of banquet manager		signature of the host	

function prospectus form

The detailed information collected is entered in Function Prospectus or

Function Contract sheet and signed by banquet in-charge and the host. the copies of the function prospectus sent to the following departments-

- **Front office;** as it is the first point of contact, the invitees coming and attending the function will be enquiring the front office about the function venue or anything pertaining to the function. If any complementary rooms are given to the host, that should be booked by the front office.

- **Housekeeping:** Responsible for cleaning and decorating the function hall cleaning the banquet hall and ensuring wash room's cleanliness and supplies, making flower arrangements. Banquet linen laundry. etc.

- **Maintenance:** Responsible for ensuring all electric gadgets, A/C AV equipment's are properly working.

Kitchen: It is concerned with the provision of dishes offered in the menu on time at adequate quantity. It helps the kitchen crew to plan its production schedule in advance. It is informed about any special dietary requirements of the host

- **Security:** The security department should be notified to ensure adequate security and are informed in advance about large movement of people and the traffic control.

The details obtained from the host are written in the function prospectus or function contract sheet and signed by both the banquet manager and the host with the terms and conditions. The format may change from hotel to hotel.

During the function, generator back up, fire extinguishers, and first aid must be kept ready.

Guarantee clause :

Requires group booking for functions to give the hotel account of the expected attendance prior to the function usually 72 hours in advance.

This count is the minimum expected or guaranteed attendance, the group is charged for its guaranteed number even if actual attendance falls below the guarantee.

The guarantee clause is important because it helps catering managers control labor and food cost.

Managing the function

The banquet manager is primarily responsible for the management of the actual function, and supervises room arrangement, service personnel and service procedure

Following Up: Follow up service is an important step in building a base of repeat clients.

A thank you letter, with an evaluation form should be sent to the client. A follow-up note should be sent if the evaluation is not required within a specific length of time.

Any negative information can be used to correct flaws in service or avoid similar problems with other clients, while positive comments can be a source of encouragement for employees.

Adjustment in charges, a letter of apology could be sent. The client should be given a reason to try the property again and recommend the property to business associates and acquaintances.

5.1.4 Banquet Sales_Maximize Sales

MAXIMIZE Banquet Sales

Schedule Two Turns

Create specific reservation times for private parties, so you can guarantee two turns per lunch or dinner service periods. For instance, schedule a 5:30pm event that must end by 7:30pm, and then a second reservation at 8:00pm.

To help manage the flow of guests during the turn, direct them to a separate reception area to begin their party. Add hors d'oeuvres and cocktails to increase the banquet check average.

Re-Book Parties from Last Year

Contact customers who just celebrated with you to see if they'd like to re-book for this year. Often companies and families like to create a tradition of celebrating at the same location from year to year.

Confirming a date early in the year also takes the pressure off of the event planner. They are able to reserve a prime date, and they don't have to worry about running out of venue selections closer to the holidays.

Photo Galleries

For the meeting planner you might include how the event space looks when you arrange the room in different directions – like the stage at one end instead of the other.

For the couple looking to get married, you might include galleries of other couples weddings at your venue, not just one photo but a set of photos of their wedding – this will provide future couples with inspiration for their wedding and associate that inspiration with your space.

Include photos and videography as services to generate more revenue.

Social Media

Taking the photo galleries even further, you could post about events as they happen (or after) on social media. Chances are the customer will repost the content if you tag them which gets even more eyes on your event space.

In fact, one of the latest event trends is to create a hashtag for the event, this makes it extremely easy for your marketing team to locate and share images of your space.

Create Menu Packages

Creating a set of menu packages for the season or occasion offers many benefits. For the customer, they make the ordering process fun and easy.

For the venue, they ensure a higher check average to maximize revenue and they help streamline kitchen and service operations.

Service needs to be very efficient when trying to turn a room without compromising the guests' experience.

Include Decorations

Providing beautiful room decorations and re-usable centerpieces for private dining events adds value from the event planner's viewpoint. The host wants to select a festive venue for their guests, but don't want to use money from their party budget on décor. Re-usable centerpieces also help expedite the room turns because you don't have to coordinate floral deliveries or compete with guests trying to decorate..

Offer Meals To Go

Many hotels, restaurants and clubs offer meals to go. This can be a cost effective way to increase revenue specially during slower month. Recipes should be tested,

so accurate cooking, warming and serving instructions can be provided. If possible, enable your guests to order online to increase awareness and add convenience.

Host Event Party – Like New Year’s Eve or Diwali

A New Year's Eve party is often an excellent way to top off event sales on the last day of the year. Guests expect to pay a premium price, so throw a party they'll not soon forget. Of course, your vendors will be charging premium prices too.

Try to develop partners that you can book every year at guaranteed rates.

5.2.1 Meeting Room Sales

MEETING ROOM SPACES

- ❖ If you have meeting rooms in hotel, then it makes sense to make sure you make as much revenue from these rooms as you can while offering the best possible experience to your clients.
- ❖ Revenue generated relates directly to the amount of space available.
- ❖ Selling the least desirable space first increases the maximum space usage. If the desirable spaces don't sell the previous booked meetings can be moved into the prime spaces.
- ❖ Concentration on selling spaces during times when business is usually slow. A convention selling manager may set policies on selling meeting spaces in large hotels, smaller properties may have the sales director or manager deal with this aspect.
- ❖ Understand the hotel industry trends.

Optimize hotel sales and marketing with better distribution

Your group bookings are more successful when you acquire them in a cost-effective way. Top hotels have created channels where planners can book event spaces directly.

This move makes sense for properties and chains of all sizes because:

- Hotels can connect directly with planners.
- Hotels are able to build up a network of planners and improve repeat business.
- Majority of planners now do their venue research online.

VENUE LISTING

What to Include in Your Venue Listing

- Accurate floor plans.** If the platform lets you add a floorplan, you should. Planners find them to be immensely helpful.
- Quality photos.** Photos that show the possibilities in your space. Include images of past events to help planners visualize their event at your hotel.
- Video.** In our survey of planners, 40% said that a video is the most helpful way to visualize a space.
- Differentiating details.** What elements set your space apart? And more importantly, how can your space meet the unique objectives of various meeting types?
- Use testimonials.** Show off the success of past events to prove that future events can run smoothly in your hotel.

Partner with CVBs.

Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) are local non-profits that are typically funded by a portion of hotel room occupancy taxes. CVBs recommend hotels and venues to planners based on the specific needs of the event. That means that RFPs from CVBs are generally more qualified than leads. Best of all, these leads come at no cost to the property.

Improve hotel lead management

With growing demand and more RFPs, properties could be swimming in a sea of never-ending RFPs. And because 75% of proposals are won by the first five properties to respond, you need to manage those leads well.

- ❖ Speed up RFP response. A 24-hour turnaround has becoming the new standard at some leading hotels and chains. A quick response not only gets a proposal in front of planners before competitors, but it also communicates that your hotel prioritizes their business and communicates efficiently. After all, there's no second chance at a first impression.
- ❖ Fine tune your lead scoring. The more leads you have, the more important it is to pinpoint the most promising inquiries. Even with an influx of RFPs, opportunity is lost without a smart lead scoring system in place. To make it happen, take a second look at your internal processes. Technology is again playing a huge role, with new systems that automatically score leads as they come in.
- ❖ Segment your group business. No hotel can be everything to every customer. Hotels and chains have to be realistic about what they can do well. Just as importantly, they need to pinpoint the right customers to target with those offerings.

Give your hotel sales strategy a more targeted approach. Identify the broad groups you want to attract (say, weddings). Then, divide those groups into segments (perhaps traditional weddings, or weddings of a particular size).

Different groups have different needs, different acquisition costs, different timelines, and different profitability. You need to market and sell to them accordingly for more effective hotel sales.

Improve your RFP (Request for proposal) responses with better proposals.

Timely and targeted RFP responses are one thing. But no matter how fast and personalize your response is, you need to put together an effective event proposal.

- ❖ **Show, don't tell.** When planners can visualize the space, they can imagine their event in the hotel — and they have a vision of their event long before they ever send an RFP. Use real tours or virtual tours.
- ❖ **Use past events to prove events will be successful.** A large part of the group sales process is providing peace of mind to prospects. You can show prospects a similar event using galleries.
- ❖ **Tap into the event's purpose and objectives.** Today, attendees want meetings to have more meaning, innovation, insight, and personalization.

Make hotel F&B a bigger part of your group sales strategy

Location and price are the two biggest determining factors in site selection. But the third-ranking answer might come as a surprise: In a recent survey of event planners, it was hotel F&B. That means when planners have multiple venues at the right price and location, they look to food & beverage as a differentiator. Especially for higher-tier hotels, F&B sales are a significant revenue driver.

Grow F&B efficiency through event management technology.

5.2.2 Meeting Room Setup

MEETING ROOM STYLES/SETUP

Theatre style

Senate style (semicircle)

V shaped

U-shaped

T-shaped

Hollow square

School room

Herring bone

Board Of Director

Banquet

MEETING ROOM FACILITIES

Audiovisual equipment

Microphones of various types

P A S

Overheads or slide projectors

Speaker equipment

Flip chart stands

Easels / blackboard /White board

Portable stage

Podium.

Theater setup

Senate Setup

V Shaped Setup

U Shaped Setup

T Shaped Setup

Hollow Square setup

Schoolroom or classroom setup

Herringbone style setup

Board of directors setup

Banquet Set up

Booking AND MANAGING Meeting room

- Release dates
- Getting setups done in advance
- Staff doing set up
- Last minute changes

5.2.3 Meeting Room Components of Sales Packaging

MEETING ROOM PACKAGES

it's a common practice for hotels to offer corporate conference and meeting packages as options for event planners who hold seminars, conferences, and other meetings at the hotel.

The idea behind offering packaged corporate event venue services is to combine all the various elements of meeting room space, food and beverage, and audio-visual needs into a meeting package for a flat daily rate on a per attendee basis. Not only can this practice be generally more efficient for those involved in the planning of the event, but it makes managing and predicting the costs associated with the venue a much more straightforward process.

PACKAGE PRICING

Daily meeting package /flat rate –Typically includes the use of the meeting rooms, food and beverage needs , screens , Internet access, flip charts and sound systems, arrangements for coffee break(s) etc. The available meeting package(s) essentially included everything that a planner would need to include in a meeting.

Meeting/ Accommodations - For those who required overnight guest rooms, they also requested a special/negotiated rate for accommodations into their conference overall event rates. While these packages would cover a majority of the event needs, planners would still negotiate for other event requirements, such as exhibition area, gala dinners, cocktail receptions, and other event agenda items.

Variations:

- ✓ Full Day Conference Delegate Package
- ✓ "AM" Half Day Conference Delegate Package
- ✓ "PM" Half Day Conference Delegate Package

KEY FOR MEETING ROOM SALES

➤ **Build Relationships**

Building relationships with conference organizers is a key element of all conference room marketing strategies. Conference organizers can become regular clients if they feel that your facilities are suitable. Conference organizers work in

the marketing departments of large companies that have a busy schedule of conferences and other events. They also work in companies specializing in event management.

➤ **Information**

Another important marketing strategy is to provide comprehensive venue information that is easy for organizers to find. Include information on your location, rates, meeting facilities, room capacity, conference services, catering, travel and accommodation on your website. Include keywords in the text that highlight your location to help organizers who are searching for meeting facilities in your area.

➤ **Don't be tempted to drop your rates to increase bookings**

Small hotels often drop their prices in an attempt to pull in more customers. Unfortunately this leads to a 'race to the bottom' scenario because independently run hotels can't compete with the budget chains. In fact there's almost always someone who can offer rooms cheaper than you, so dropping your rate is rarely the best strategy.

➤ **Differentiate your venue from your competitors**

Instead of competing on price, find a way to make your venue stand out from all the others in your area. Give your guests a reason to choose your venue over the one a mile down the road from you. You can differentiate your venue from your competitors based on service or branding, for example. While a basic, functional room with tea and coffee may be fine for some meetings, a client may want a more secluded or inspiring setting for her personal development workshops. If you can offer this kind of setting then you may well be able to charge extra.

➤ **Add additional sources of revenue**

Don't be too pushy but do try to gently persuade your clients to spend a little more. You might ask if the client would like a great deal on rooms for those delegates

who are staying the night before the meeting or perhaps another night after the event so they can spend some leisure time in your area. Or you could offer an upgrade on their refreshments package.

➤ **Host both business and private functions**

Could you expand on the ways you're currently using your meeting rooms? If you're offering them to business, you could offer private events such as weddings or reunions, too.

➤ **Look at what's going on in your local area**

Keeping on top of what's happening in your local area means that you are able to offer customers exactly what they want, when they need it.

➤ **Network with other nearby businesses**

Networking with other area businesses that tend to attract business travelers could help you spread the word about your meeting rooms or even create opportunities to work together with those businesses. For example, clients can be encouraged to your venue if you offer a special rate for anyone who books a room and shows a ticket or receipt from your networking partner.

➤ **Make sure your employees are happy**

It's important that your employees have a friendly and outgoing manner with your customers. If you make your employees happy by paying them fairly and recognizing their achievements, they will want to be good ambassadors for your business. When your employees go above and beyond what's on their job description, it leads to happier customers, repeat visits and for your customers to tell others about your venue.

5.2.4 Booking Meeting Rooms

BOOKING MEETING ROOMS

Finalizing of arrangements. Sales person can fill out a function book space request form with all details of functional requirement.

Release date should be said 60 to 90 days prior to the event, meeting rooms that are not needed can be released and the hotel can sell the spaces to other groups.

Tentative booking can be given to other groups in case the first group needs all spaces then a lost business report needs to be filled out.

Get the right talent and technology

Whether it's for an intimate corporate gathering or major meeting, clients want a great experience where everything flows smoothly.

If you can deliver on your promises, clients will book again and refer other businesses your way.

Bring on event professionals who know how to make meetings happen and equip them with the right technology tools so your hotel can host amazing meetings

Network with partners

Networking allows trusted partners to help you book your meeting room facilities. Let travel agents, meeting planners, and events professionals know that your hotel is open for business events. Give your partners all the information they need to refer corporate clients your way.

Since networking is a relationship, find out how you can help your partners achieve their goals then make it a point to follow through. When you make someone else's job easier, they'll remember you – and go out of their way to refer you business

Showcase your business facilities online

Before a new client books your function room, they'll visit your website to check out your business facilities. When you've got a complete website with updated photos, a list of amenities, and corporate meeting packages, you'll wow prospective clients.

To attract the widest range of possible clients, break out your meeting facilities into packages that accommodate events of all sizes. Not only can you win more corporate business, you may be able to host multiple small events at once, exponentially increasing your meetings revenue.

Allow clients to reserve online or send a contact form

Lack of follow-up is one top reason that hotels lose out on meetings and events. Make it easy for parties to reserve your room by incorporating an online booking function, providing a contact form, or both.

Accepting bookings online saves your meeting planner time, but may not be right for every facility. If you do not allow online reservations for meeting facilities, place a follow-up protocol in place.

Best practice is to follow up via email or phone within 24 hours. Simply implementing this step will dramatically increase the number of meetings you book. Consider that one meeting broker complained that 46% of their clients never heard back from hotels they contacted about meetings, or heard back too late.

Experiment with different offerings

If your meeting rooms still aren't being booked, it might be time to change your approach. Given the rise in mobile workforces, there is a need for small-scale, per-hour room rentals. You might be able to pack in several small meetings, each holding 50 or fewer attendees, and add on food and beverage services too.

Think about your meeting facilities from a business perspective. By offering everything companies need to host great meetings painlessly, you can increase your bookings and revenue.