

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE** **TACTICS THAT MAKE SALES**

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It's all about empathy, hand-holding, listening,  
leadership & non-embarrassment.

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### **Some First Thoughts On Making Sales**

It's more about the salesperson's ideas,  
professionalism, and user-friendliness  
than the food, location, or amenities.

The shopper can get "catering" from lots  
of different places, but they can't "feel" as  
confident unless they hire you.

Hire vs. Buy?

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### **Let's Start With Inbound Marketing**

The procedures for receiving and  
handling a shopper's info requests from  
phone calls, email, or walk-ins make or  
break the sale.

Let's understand the shopping experience when  
prospects contact a caterer for information...

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- a. They don't just contact one caterer... at least three.
- b. They "learn" and "adapt" as they contact more caterers.
- c. They quickly realize the "sameness" of each caterer.
- d. They feel "interrogated" by caterers. (again "sameness")
- e. They're told to wait to get questions answered.

A bell goes off in their minds when they finally make contact with a "different" type of caterer.

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## Incoming Phone Calls:

- a. Can't go to "technology handling" during business hours.
- b. The selling begins with the first voice they hear.
- c. Who should take the first call?
- d. Give your name.
- e. Answer all questions when asked... at least partially.
- f. Educate as you take info. Don't "work them over".

• It's just a matter of treating them as you would wish to be treated if you were shopping.

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## Reminders:

Never before has "first touch" hospitality been so important. You get one shot...

- For potentially higher volume prospects the culinary and ops team should also make contact and/or meet with the prospect.

Qualification is very important!

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## Basic Qualification:

We need to learn their event date, type of event, approximate number of guests, and make them aware of our price ranges.

- *"If I may ask you a few questions I will be able to assist you myself or place you with the correct planner."*
- *"What is the date of your event?"*
- *"What type of event will it be?"*
- *"Approximately how many guests will be serving?"*

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## Basic Qualification:

- *"It seems that a lot of other clients have found your dates to be very popular - please let me check to make sure of our availability."*

Placing them on hold while you check dates will raise your closing average.

What about "budget?"

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## Basic Qualification:

- *"Great. From what you've shared with me so far, I can confidently say that for a wedding of 225 guests on September 12, 2012, we will have a variety of exciting solutions ranging from \$65 to \$95 per guest. Is that the price range you were seeking?"*

The first 180 seconds can make or break the sale.

It's more about how they answer rather than what they answer.

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## Action Plans:

"From what you've told me so far, you need to speak with (name), he/she specializes in larger weddings."

"Before I transfer you to (name) I just want to tell you a little about (him/her) that will help you in the planning..."

The easiest way to make buyers feel important and that they are speaking to the right company is to offer a specialist.

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## Action Plans:

Don't interrogate when gathering info.  
Mix info and attitude questions.

1. What is the reason for the event?
2. Do you enjoy planning events yourself?
3. What colors do you see for the event?
4. What are your feelings about appetizers before dinner?
5. How early do you need access to the ballroom?
6. What's on your special wish list for the event?
7. What concerns should I be aware of?

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## Incoming Emails:

- a. Filter them to the right mail boxes.
- b. Determine their "importance" and urgency.
- c. Use "automatic" return message received response.
- d. Send personalized response a.s.a.p. (Expand)
- e. Educate with PDF, Youtube, Audio Clip, Facebook, etc.

• Yes, emails can be a pain, but they are the way of the future and need to be managed.

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## Walk-Ins:

- a. The entire staff needs to understand what to do.
- b. Signage showing hours and/or directions of where to go.
- c. Have a walkthrough procedure that staff can execute.
- d. Qualify, reschedule, walkthrough and/or sell.
- e. Sometimes it is just incorrect or impossible to take time.

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## Let's Talk Sales:

- a. Salespeople are the creators of profit & growth.
- b. There are no tricks in selling, just words & practice.
- c. Selling is making friends in a very short time.
- d. Salespeople are developed... not born into it!

If You Don't Sell It, You Can't Cook It

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## Batting Averages

Out of every ten sales attempts...

- three (3) are going to buy... no matter what.
- three (3) are not going to buy... no matter what.
- four (4) are shopping and going to choose the winner from a final group of two caterers.

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Sell "non-embarrassment" not just food, ballrooms, and sleeping rooms. Boast about your fellow team members and your facility.

*"Mrs. Smith, please let me take a moment and share with you why I chose to work with (your company)."*

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### Techniques...

- a. Sell yourself first on your company's worth.
- b. To the buyer... sell yourself, the company, the team, and then the food... in that order.
- c. Learn the difference between order-taking and selling.
- d. Stay positive, but "correct" shoppers if needed.
- e. Rush towards shopper's objections.
- f. Continually sell non-embarrassment.

Tell the shopper the questions they should be asking and then answer them!

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### The Salesperson...

- a. Is the quarterback... they make promises to the client.
- b. Is the company's image protector.
- c. Has profitability in their hands.
- d. Needs the support of others.
- e. Needs to check with the chef on certain things.
- f. Needs to stay in the "selling" mode... continually.
- g. Is the face of the company.

Above all...  
salespeople create everyone's salaries!

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## Value:

Value to most shoppers is saving money, looking good to others, or getting "favorable" answers to their requests.

- Getting into the ballroom early to set up
  - Being able to make a smaller deposit
  - Getting a discount on some non-food items
  - The "Grandmother won't get wet" concept.
- Buyers feel value when they "GET" something from you ... not when you GIVE them something.

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Up-sell everything early and often... people will pay for a "sunroof" if you tell them about it.

*"Our chef has created some very exciting new menus that I will describe soon."*

*"Some brides have done some very dynamic designs in this ballroom. I've got some photos I'll show you after our tour."*

*"Thanks for your deposit. By the way, our chef just announced a new action station that would fit beautifully with your menu. May I tell you about it?"*

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Market and sell what your product/services do for clients... not just what they are.

"Appetizers" **VERSUS** "A Variety of Cold and Hot Appetizers Presented on Specialty Trays Passed to Guests By Uniformed Staff."

"Buffet" **VERSUS** "16 Foot Buffet With Customized Ice Carved Centerpiece And Chefs Serving Guests".

"As your guests enter the ballroom they will be..."

Verbs and adjectives make sales.  
Nouns are shallow!

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## Power Words...

- "Unlike other caterers..."
- "Our clients tell us constantly that..."
- "At ABC Catering, we..."
- "One reason for our success is..."

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## Advanced Thinking:

1. You need to continually present the shopper with "real-world" scenarios and stories.
2. Selling is not lecturing. Selling is teaching through selling.
3. Sell the event that they envision, but protect them from making mistakes or missteps.
4. Continually ask yourself why you are a salesperson.

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## Reminders:

The team needs to explain to shoppers that prices include much more than just the food.

Proper price also includes proper:

- Sanitation
- Portion size
- Staff that cares
- Quality of vendors
- Menu variety
- Overnight room convenience
- Easy to get to location
- Non-embarrassment

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### 3 Important Pricing Concepts

- Chicken is just chicken to most buyers.
- A buyer of weddings with three unmarried daughters living at home looks at price differently than a buyer who has just one daughter to marry.
- Buyers have a "begrudging" point of no return. Some prices just don't make sense.

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### The "ate" Concept

- Motivate
- Innovate
- Aggravate
- Communicate
- Debate
- Educate
- Celebrate
- Negotiate

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Touch customers, make friends and believe in "happy" positive customer harassment.

Time for hospitality offense - stay positive, embrace buyers, think team, and unleash your creativity!

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