

## Unlikely Bedfellows

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Should technology play a role in sales? The simplest answer to that question is “Yes.” Sales decks have been using movies played on VCR and DVD Players, as well as music played on stereos to produce energy on sales decks since the beginning! The question we should ask is: “Which technology will improve my sales?”

Many professionals in our industry are wary of technology and sales working together. They consider the two unlikely bedfellows. Can we improve sales past its present level by maintaining the status quo? No! Technology is the next step in our sales evolution.

### The Next Step

Professional golfers such as Tiger Woods have amazing talents. But they continue to hone and improve those talents by filming, analyzing, and creating computer models of their swing in order to train and improve their game. Technology facilitates this sophisticated modeling to improve their game. Just as Tiger and others have done, we should use technology to optimize our performance on the sales floor.

The correct use of technology tools available to us right now will allow us to obliterate the present levels of sales efficiencies, close rates, rescission rates, and other key performance indicators. Go ahead and compare us against other industries - despite the focus on sales we are not performing as we could. We waste a lot of money by being inefficient and unsophisticated in our sales efforts.

Continually increasing marketing, legal, development, and operational costs are only confirming the fact that we need to increase sales efficiencies. Technology will allow us to improve our game and improve sales performance. Here are a few technology options as well as some points of clarification that are worth knowing: (Note: The focus of these technologies is related to the sales effort specifically. While marketing may benefit it isn't the focus of my comments here.)

### Technology You Don't Know You Have

As mentioned above, the common VCR player and stereo systems are examples of good technology for use on the sales deck. They are inexpensive, easy to use, and have the potential to create positive emotion for both guests and staff.

An audio/visual presentation can do wonderful things for credibility, breaking the pact, and engaging the client in the presentation. Unfortunately, they are rarely used to their full potential. For example, a movie played during the sales presentation is an excellent way to create an entertaining and engaging experience for the guest. Unfortunately, most movies I see

on sales decks play to factual information and lack the emotional appeal required to make the sales process an experience. A poorly done movie makes this previously cheap technology some of the most expensive!

### **A Sales System**

A sales system such as Generator Systems is an integrated set of tools that will improve the sales pitch to the point it becomes a business process. Once the pitch is a process, you can do amazing things to increase sales efficiency – pitch consistency, professionalism, clarity, and transparency of the presentation will be enhanced. Guests are impressed, managers have more control as well as the information they need to improve the pitch, focus training needs, and increase the accountability of salespeople.

While an “interactive sales presentation” or a “sales kiosk” may become part of a sales system, the emphasis of the system should be on process improvement, not as an excuse to use technology. Let me emphasize this point: This is a process improvement, not a quick fix gimmick!

### **Technology That Works**

We all desire that any investment in technology contribute to the sales process. Yet sales organizations continue to spend money where it helps the least. The following simple guideline would help focus the priority and save us from making a poor investment:

The number one thing that sells timeshare is emotion; the second is the relationship with their salesperson. Any technology used on the sales deck should be specifically targeted to create positive emotions or help sell the salesperson.

Technology will reach the guest’s emotional buttons by informing while it entertains. Great movies and sales systems inspire a roller-coaster of emotion - but you never, ever think of the technology behind the movie.

Financially, you should be able to quantify the results of your technology decision. Return on Investment (ROI) is a common way to measure the success or failure of technology. Simply review the money spent vs. the resulting increase. With a marketing video you will only be able to estimate the success. With a sales system such as the Generator System, you can actually measure the improvement!

How should we measure success? Conservatively estimate the soft aspects of impressing the client, creating the right feelings, and any other contribution of the technology to the sales experience. I like to ask the question: How many sales will realistically result from that technology? Take the number of new sales and compare the cost to measure the return.

In the case of a sales system, you should be able to measure the success on actual results by taking a key indicator, such as VPG, and comparing it before and after the using the sales system. Forecasting this performance can only be done based upon a track record.



If a potential technology partner has a track record of providing long term results they will propose a relationship to share the risk as well as the rewards of mutual success.

### **Conclusion**

Just as sports professionals use sophisticated technology to improve, we as an industry can't improve sales without becoming more sophisticated in our approach to sales. Technology is the key to improving our sales performance. Technology that can entertain and improve the emotional experience of the guest while creating additional belief in the salesperson is technology that will improve sales. If we cannot measure this improvement then it may not really be there.

The future of timeshare sales lies in the blending of technology, emotion and entertainment. Process focused technology has a strong track record for improving sales performance. Developers and sales professionals that truly want to improve their game and differentiate themselves from the crowd will adopt these technologies during the next 12 months.

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