



The Disruptive Competitor:

by Joseph A. Rogan

Over the past number of months I have noticed a disconcerting trend as I meet with hotel sales teams across New England to help them gain a competitive edge in their respective markets....For a sales person, this should be the best of times because the competition is mentally frozen in this state of economic gloom and doom. The trend I see is, do sales people really want to ignore conventional wisdom and make the action or sales happen? Customers actually are looking for some creative energy and new ideas to draw from. Planners don't want to be fawned over, they are too busy, but they do want to be impressed. Do you impress your customers? Moreover, do you impress your potential customers?

It is a fact that the onsite sales manager's role, as we know it today, is headed for extinction. Those who are going to survive, are the players who know the market and do their due diligence of total account analysis associated with being a "disruptive competitor" to win more of what business is actually out there that they want and need.

The term "Disruptive Competitor" was coined by Clayton Christensen a Harvard Business School professor and his associate Michael Raynor who is the Director of the "thought leadership team" at Delloite. These men collaborated on a New York Times Bestseller titled: *The Innovator's Solution – Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth*.

The cutting edge in sales today is revolving around a more introspective look at one's daily work habits and how motivated they are over the long term. Decision Management is a concept that focuses on how an individual manages his day on a priority basis. Lou Holtz, former Notre Dame Football coach and motivator described it in one word - WIN (What's Important Now). Every day is different and it brings on new challenges, but what is important NOW, what is the task at hand that is the most important thing to focus on?

The days of the "lucky phone call" are becoming farther and fewer between....that is one reason why sales operations are being either outsourced or taken off property because the actual job of selling is not being done well...Order takers can be anywhere and there are just too many distractions and not enough productivity. Hellooooo.

We as a discipline (sales people) are out of focus --- It seems conventional wisdom and clichés are the norm to justify mediocre performance. Owners, Senior Executives and GM's are growing weary of this well intentioned mantra.

Forecasting, Processing and Meetings – Too much of a sales person's time and energy are wasted on forecasting what may happen based on what happened ...how about just getting the sales team out there and start selling? Forecasting meetings discussing Yield, Penetration and REVPAR indexes are torture. Does the prospect even care about REVPAR?

Again, the storm clouds are gathering for upper management to justify eliminating the sales person from the onsite location because they are not selling 80 % of the time. Those that are, will always have a job. To stay relevant, a sales person needs to take on a singular, focused mindset of sell, sell, sell...if not, they will go the way of the electric typewriter and hard bound OAG guides...does anyone have any white out?