

VIRTUAL SELLING 2021

Case Study

Hotel management company declares war on dull, boring Zoom sales calls. Bookings and RevPar increase immediately as brand adopts fun and creative virtual selling ideas and tactics



Situation

One year into the pandemic, Franklin Hotels and Resorts had fully migrated to virtual selling. Over 80% of their clients and sales prospects had embraced participating on virtual calls.

Both buyers and sellers had become comfortable navigating the intricacies of video sales calls. In fact, the time to conduct a video sales call was significantly shorter than traditional face-to-face meetings. Specifically, a virtual sales call took 42% of the time of a traditional-in-person meeting.

Problem

During the spring of 2021, Sam Roth, vice president of sales, had identified an alarming increase in the number of no-shows by clients and prospects alike. Only one member of his sales team had not reported a recent resistance from clients to participate in online video calls.

It was the consensus of the Franklin's sales team that Zoom fatigue was setting in across the board.

Due to a massive increase in volume, Zoom was experiencing dropped calls and freeze-ups.

A familiar response had just begun to reappear: "Just send me the information and I will look it over."

After twelve months of being sequestered in their homes, both clients and prospects had simply grown bored of participating in one video call after another.

Solution

Fast Company magazine reported that the one sure way to lose market share was to be boring to do business with, while the one sure way to grow your client base was to be fun to do business with.

Marketing expert Tom Peters tells us that 70% of B2B buyers would switch suppliers today if they could find someone more fun to do business with.

Ironically, the one sales manager not experiencing Zoom resistance was his top producer. In fact, she was selling ten times more versus the number two salesperson. Sam quickly debriefed his top producer and shared her specific tactics with the team.

She credited her success to adopting the specific strategies and tactics taught in the online course Virtual Selling in 2021.

Exactly twenty-four hours before each sales appointment, she would send a simple email to the client to reconfirm the time plus log-on instructions. An agenda for the meeting was always attached. On the day of the meeting, she would resend the Zoom link plus all handouts, slides, presentation decks, etc. This email not only served as a reminder but ensured that if any technical difficulties popped up, everyone would have the materials required to conduct the sales call over the phone.

If the virtual sales call was scheduled for the morning, she would ship a small, padded envelope of gourmet coffees and teas. If it was the first call with a prospect, she would include coffee mugs imprinted with her company logo.

Whenever possible, she would schedule appointments with VIP clients for noon. She would provide her client with a menu twenty-four hours in advance and have lunch delivered precisely at 11:55 a.m.

If the meeting took place in the afternoon, she would overnight a small bag of cookies, chocolates, gourmet coffee, and tea bags. Clients looked forward to her virtual sales calls.

One memorable tactic was her use of creative, colorful Zoom backgrounds. Her clients never knew which background she would be using. She never used the same visual background twice. She appeared on a beach, in the Grand Canyon, or in front of the Eiffel Tower. It was always a surprise.

She learned how to use so many high-quality backgrounds in the Virtual Selling in 2021 course. She specifically mastered how to use a service called Canva to create professional, memorable backgrounds for free.

Finally, she shared with her coworkers a key philosophy of Virtual Selling in 2021: “You may not always be able to be the best or the cheapest, but you can always be the most fun to do business with. When you are fun to do business with, your clients will become walking, talking billboards for you and your hotels.”