

LET'S TALK INDUSTRY NEEDS: A GUIDE FOR TRAVEL MANAGERS & HOTELS

While independent hotels may not all have the resources to offer a dedicated sales person for the entertainment and creative sectors, all hotels must remain aware of potential issues that can arise between buyers and hotels when dealing with clients in these industries. It all boils down to trust: buyers have faith that sales representatives understand group needs, but aren't so confident that the people on the ground will receive all the relevant information. But, as with all relationships, trust can be created by improving communication on both sides. Here's how it's done (and how L.E/Miami can help, too):

The Problem

Why do travel buyers have trust issues when sending VIP clients to hotels?

- Our industry has high turnover, so we need to find a way to communicate standards – such as billing, amenities, or transportation – quickly, and in a tangible way
- There's a disconnect when information is given to hotel operations teams – there doesn't always appear to be an internal process to share VIP information with restaurants and housekeeping, i.e. *all* staff
- A lot of client information is similar across hotels, but there's no consistency in the way it's presented. If information was showcased in a more engaging way to the staff at each hotel, it might be paid more attention to and key information could be snapped up more easily

The Solution

L.E/Miami will...

- Initiate more workshops and/or training sessions to help educate the wider industry
- Take a more proactive role in providing access to information on best practices to members of the L.E/Miami Collective

Buyers will...

- Provide title, reason for travel and as much detail as possible on preferences for their VIP guests
- Explain the "why" and background on requests

The Solution: continued.

Hotels will...

- Create a thorough Group Resume used for group bookings, so all specific details are collected upfront and the hotel is fully equipped to communicate this information internally
- Create a thorough Transient Questionnaire for VIP transient bookings using applicable questions from the group resume, with all specific details and notes included in the reservation for front desk and all departments
- Share completed Resumes/Questionnaires (Group and Transient) with the buyer to confirm all is accurate
- Hold regular meetings with all department heads prior to guest arrival to review resume AND explain the "why" behind VIP requests, so staff understand
- Empower employees to surprise and delight guests (i.e. airlines have up to \$500 to please a client; an agency may give an employee a \$1,000 "happy fund" to keep clients satisfied)
- Think outside the box and get creative with your solutions
- Ensure GMs and management understand they need to empower teams to make decisions and solve problems
- Encourage their sales and management teams to show gratitude, thanking their staff and sharing success stories to change the mindsets of their employees
- Adopt a 'never say no' mindset, working together internally and always understanding the customer experience really is everything
- Being 'human' and empathetic to needs
- Focus on keeping it consistent and most importantly, fun! Incentivise teams and empower them to deliver the best service
- Create an easy-to-follow, 1-2 page contract with short, simple and flexible terms, like the example template you can download from the L.E/Miami website