



Three Questions

Presented by SalesBoost

with

Tom Faust

Vice President of Sales at Benchmark Global

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About Tom Faust

Vice President of Sales at
Benchmark Global



A recognized hotel industry leader, Tom Faust joined Benchmark in February 2016 as Vice President, Sales and in this role is responsible for leading the Global Sales Team as well as the Sales Automation/ CRM initiatives and leading and advocating for the sales & marketing teams for a group of Benchmark luxury hotels and resorts.

Prior to joining Benchmark, and since 2007, Tom was with Omni Hotels & Resorts for eight years as Vice President, Sales. In this leadership role, Tom was responsible for creating and directing revenue generating strategies across the global and hotel sales networks for the entire luxury hotel brand. Prior to joining Omni, Faust spent seven years at the Anatole in Dallas under both the Wyndham and Hilton flags, and he previously spent 18 years with Sheraton and Starwood Hotels, in a variety of operations, marketing and sales roles at both the corporate and field level.

Tom has served on many boards in the past including MPI Foundation, the Executive Board of Governors of the University of North Texas Hospitality School, The Board of Directors of the ATT Cotton Bowl and in 2016, was named, Meetings Today Magazine as one of 20 industry trailblazers who set a new standard in the Meetings industry.

Tom and his wife Michele live in the Woodlands, TX, and enjoy spending time with their two granddaughters who live in nearby Houston, TX.

1

What would you say is the most valuable skill for a salesperson to hone?

Add Real Value

OK, sounds pretty pedestrian, right? Of course we need to add value, but how do we do that effectively and ensure the client has an appreciation or even awareness of that value. What does this really mean? I look at hotel sales, and particularly in the group area, as providing solutions. The Planner-partner needs to find a venue to achieve a variety of objectives; could be learning, recognition, certification, or maybe just networking or it could be all of these. In addition, the planner-partner needs the right location, meeting specs, service and amenity level and needs to deliver all of this content in a clever, unique and experiential method. Oh yeah, they probably have a budget, also... (although, when was the last time you participated in a post-event briefing, like a post-con, where the event planner congratulated the hotel/resort on an amazing experience and event that was so because it met the budget?).

Simply put, they have a need...

So what we offer is an effective solution to their need. Basic, right? Of course... but what if we went beyond the basic to really add value? What if we offered insight into effective content delivery (used to be called A/V) and in addition; insight into food and beverage, lighting, décor, music, furniture, aroma-therapy, and fitness/wellness offerings that would enhance the delivery of their specific content needs, and improve the overall learning process. **Our experience of hosting thousands of meetings and participating in effective content delivery enables us as experts.** To continue this, we must honor our craft, and put ourselves in an active and engaged, learning mode every day, to experience, share and collaborate on success. What kind of relationship do you think you would develop with the client; do you think it would build trust and confidence?

What are the top three actions a salesperson can take to improve their performance?

Learn. Practice. Adapt.

There are three tactics a salesperson can take that can be a game changer and make the difference between mediocre results and excellent results. Three words; learn, practice and adapt. Sounds simple, right? It can be – and giving you potent results – with the appropriate planning and discipline.

To stay relevant, you must constantly learn and grow both professionally and personally. **To be seen as the expert in your area and the “go-to” person for your clients, you must educate yourself on the latest industry trends, your client’s industry and business economics in general.** You must also practice your craft – your professional education should be an ongoing process. Develop a thirst for self-improvement and finding new selling techniques. Never settle or you will get stale – your clients will notice and your competition will win. Make education be a part of your daily routine. No matter your level of experience, make learning and education a priority to reinforce your confidence and the good selling behaviors that will yield strong performance and successful results. The saying is true – Knowledge Is Power.

When you are prepared, you feel more confident in yourself and your ability to achieve the desired outcome. Practice makes perfect. The biggest mistake salespeople make is giving their presentation the first time to the client. Yikes! Leave the door wide open for the competition, why don’t you! Instead, be strategic and purposeful. **When you have a presentation, site inspection or an important negotiation, always take the time to practice and role play with a colleague prior to ensure you deliver your message in the most poignant and engaging way.** Be open to new sales practices even if at first they don’t seem intuitive and practice until they become second nature. Aim to speak in terms of the customer’s need and learn to tell stories of how your hotel’s features and amenities will benefit the client or the attendees. One mistake could kill the deal or create a lack of confidence. Practice will minimize or even eliminate mistakes and will help you boost confidence, boost performance and ultimately Drive Results.

2

What are the top three actions a salesperson can take to improve their performance?

Last is to adapt. “Past behavior equals future performance,” this is a powerful statement and holds true. **You can never truly surpass your goals or achieve greatness without the adoption of different or new behaviors.** If you strive to learn and you practice (completing the first two components), adoption becomes a way a life and sets you apart from the rest. Develop a playbook that clearly documents and outlines good selling behaviors and techniques. Make role play a part of your weekly routine and have fun with it. Create goals to ensure that you are maintaining your new behaviors and reward yourself when you do meet your key benchmarks. Be the advocate and champion for the new selling behaviors and encourage them in your team members. And as a leader, successful adoption comes from the top. Show how invested you are in the new process by practicing it yourself and reward and recognize your top performers.

If you knew then what you know now, what would you tell younger self?

Deliver Professional and Personal Development

I'm as much of a fan of a cocktail party as anyone. Certainly, as hard as we all work, it is a nice opportunity to relax and network with our clients and colleagues, but it's just not an effective way of telling your story. In particular, if your story is about experience, adventure and transformation, it's boring, and you pretend not to be that!

How do you elevate your product and self, and make a meaningful difference to your clients? **Deliver professional and personal development, and do it in an enriching and fun method.** Make it memorable and enjoyable; collaborate with your partners to make it effective.

From a professional perspective; what if you were to have a discussion with your clients about the pain points? Things like contract clauses revolving around attrition and cancellation, or how about a conversation regarding revenue management? I call pain points those things that separate us from our clients. Certainly sharing our collective perspectives on these topics can only result in greater collaboration, education and solutions (there's that word again...). What if you were to engage with your local hotel association or legal resources to develop meaningful content to explore these issues and discuss our perspectives to develop more collaborative solutions?

In terms of personal development, we have so many resources available to us. We have dynamic and compelling public speakers and authors, that would love to get in front of a room full of meeting-planners (think future clients) and what if your organization developed this unique relationship with clients where you were considered the partner that delivered high quality personal and professional development, giving them the opportunity to be better at their jobs and enrich their personal lives? What kind of a relationship would you have with that client; supplier-buyer? Or perhaps, it would be a meaningful and valued partner.

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