

# Time Share Hustle



The sun, the beach, the margaritas....and yes, the time share hustle. Every year, my family vacations in Mexico. This year, like last year, we were enticed by the special gifts offered if only we'd invest 90-minutes to listen to a presentation about the resort's new development. I can only take so much sun, so why not?

But the experiences were vastly different and provide valuable lessons for those of us in sales.

My hackles went up the minute I entered the sales center this year. Cold, hungry-looking sales assistants stood at the ready waiting for their assigned targets. It felt like we were cattle being led off to slaughter.



After asking a few questions, mostly to determine our credit worthiness, we were assigned to Patti and then the hard sell started in earnest.

First she led us to a table to verify the credit cards we were asked to bring with us and inquired about our jobs, income and motivation for looking time shares. Patti completed her questionnaire and handed it to her "manager" for approval.

At breakfast, Patti plied us with all kinds of information about the resort and the beautiful people who bought there. She couldn't help but mention that three out of four families who took the tour, instantly bought. After nearly an hour, she knew nothing about us and what would motivate us to buy.

Her presentation was carefully scripted and we overheard many of the exact same lines from other sales associates with other families. At one point, I asked her if she knew which of us was the decision maker or if she

knew why we might consider buying a time share.

She ignored the questions and just kept talking about how happy her buyers were.

At another point, I asked her how much it would cost to purchase a week at the resort. Visibly offended, she explained that she would get fired if she'd tell me the price before the end of the tour. Although we were far from friends, I certainly didn't want to cost her a job, so I kept moving.

Back at the sales center, she began her canned pitch sketching graphs and drawings on her yellow pad with various colored pens. She could hardly contain her joy at being able to offer us—today only—two units for the price of one!

We had some serious objections—the area was too far from Puerto Vallarta and the furnishing in both the new resort and the older one in which we were staying were uncomfortable. She lowered the price \$5,000 without answering our concerns, but kept on pitching.

When pushed again, she said the area wasn't really far from town and that most people liked it because it was quiet and out of the city rush. If she'd asked us, she'd have found out that between us, we have six kids who come on vacation for clubs, nightlife and a bit of fun. The last thing they'd want is to be stuck out in the boonies with us!

When after more than two hours, I finally emphatically said that we just didn't like the resort, the condominiums or much of her presentation; she stormed away saying that she'd have someone over in a minute to



sign us off and give us our gifts. He was, of course, a “closer” coming in for one last attempt to make us buy.

Turn the clock back a year and there was an entirely different presentation. The sales center was warm and inviting. We were greeted by a hostess who immediately offered us drinks and a comfortable place to sit. Maria, our sales representative, had a smile a mile wide. She introduced herself to each of us taking additional time to engage our teens.

Maria was well aware that I wasn't interested in purchasing and that I was only taking the tour for the free stuff. She chuckled and said that most families toured the resort for that reason. She was also conscious of our squirming kids and the time constraints they created.

She chatted warmly as we toured the grounds, the spa, the pool and the condominiums. Within minutes, Maria figured out our hot button—family time with all of my siblings and our kids.



The resort was beautiful with a great beach and a huge waterpark. She assured the kids that, if we did buy, they could use the new pool for the balance of our vacation. The hook was set.

Maria actually sold us less than we might have purchased. Because we were first time buyers in a time share, she suggested we purchase the smallest, cheapest unit for a week every other year. She was sure

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that the benefits of interval ownership would be so good for us that we'd be back to buy additional time solely for the ability to exchange ours for other places.

She hit the nail on the head and within 60-minutes had my credit card in hand and was completing the contract. She gave us her mobile telephone number and invited us back to see her.

Like Maria, you are selling high-value lifestyle products. In order to be successful, **follow her formula:**

- Build a personal connection with your prospect.
- Ask more questions than you think you need to in order to get the prospects talking about themselves.
- Determine your prospects' motivation to buy.
- Demonstrate benefits that relate to those "hot buttons."
- Ask for your customer's business.
- Say thank you.