

Advancing the Hotelier/Planner Relationship: A View From Both Sides

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Just-Released Study

First-time research by Prevue and the IRF explores the hotel-planner relationship—where their views converge and where they differ.

Conducted in July of 2016 and is based on the responses of 160 meeting planners and 126 hotels, ensuring a 95% confidence rate in the results and a +/- 8% confidence interval.

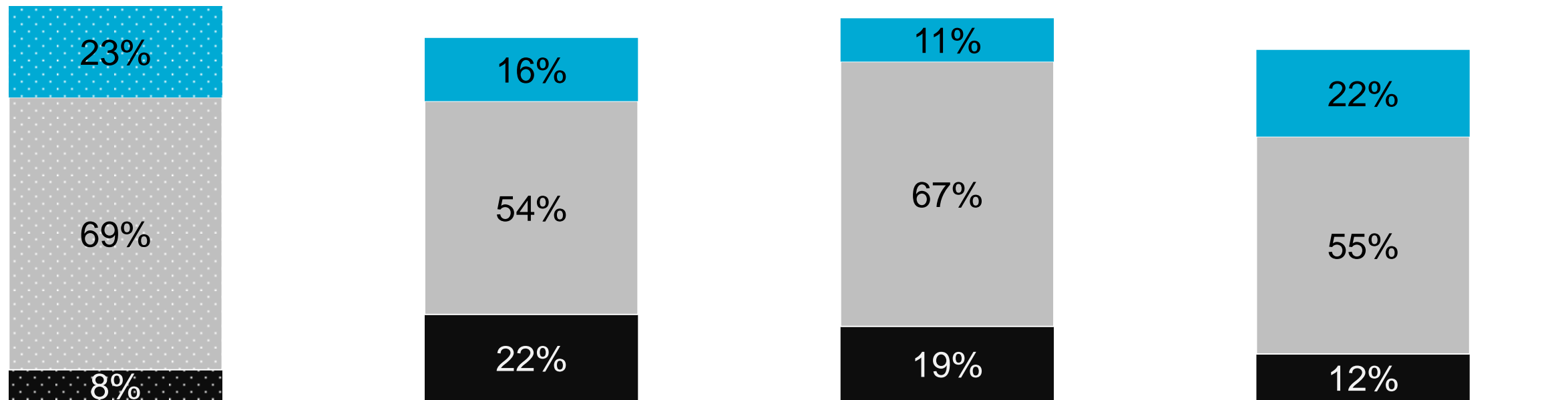
TODAY

1. State of the Relationship
2. Stage 1: Discovering the Right Property
3. Stage 2: Working through the RFP Process
4. Stage 3: Choosing the Right Property
5. Stage 4: Views on Value Added Activity
6. Moving Forward
 - What Hinders Great Programs
 - What Will Impact The Relationship

State of the Union

View of The Relationship

■ Transactional/Weak ■ Collaborative/Supportive ■ Trust/Friendship



Hotelier View on
Planners

Planner's View:
NSO

Planner's View:
Property Sales

Planner's View:
CSM

In their words. . . .

“A fantastic CSM is worth his or her weight in gold. They make or break a program.”

“Owners, GMs, DOS etc are putting so much pressure on salespeople to book business. They are making too many mistakes, taking too long to get answers and not engaging in our goals, or even asking.”

What Challenges the Relationship

	Planners	Hoteliers
Fees (Internet, service charges, resort fees, AV)	#1	#4
Salespeople (knowledge of property)	#2	
Lack of loyalty acknowledgement for repeat business	#3	#5
E-RFP systems	#4	#1
Showcasing Creative F&B (Didn't vs Couldn't)	#9	#2
Site Inspections Planners: Too long, short, or un-customized Hoteliers: Not enough time / information	#5	#3

In their words. . .

“I really dislike dealing with a sales office in another city or state that is responsible for representing a property that they are unfamiliar with.”

“Hotel sales managers need much more customer service training. We need to return to the days of “the customer is always right.”

*“Managers these days are way **too young and inexperienced** and many times, rude.”*

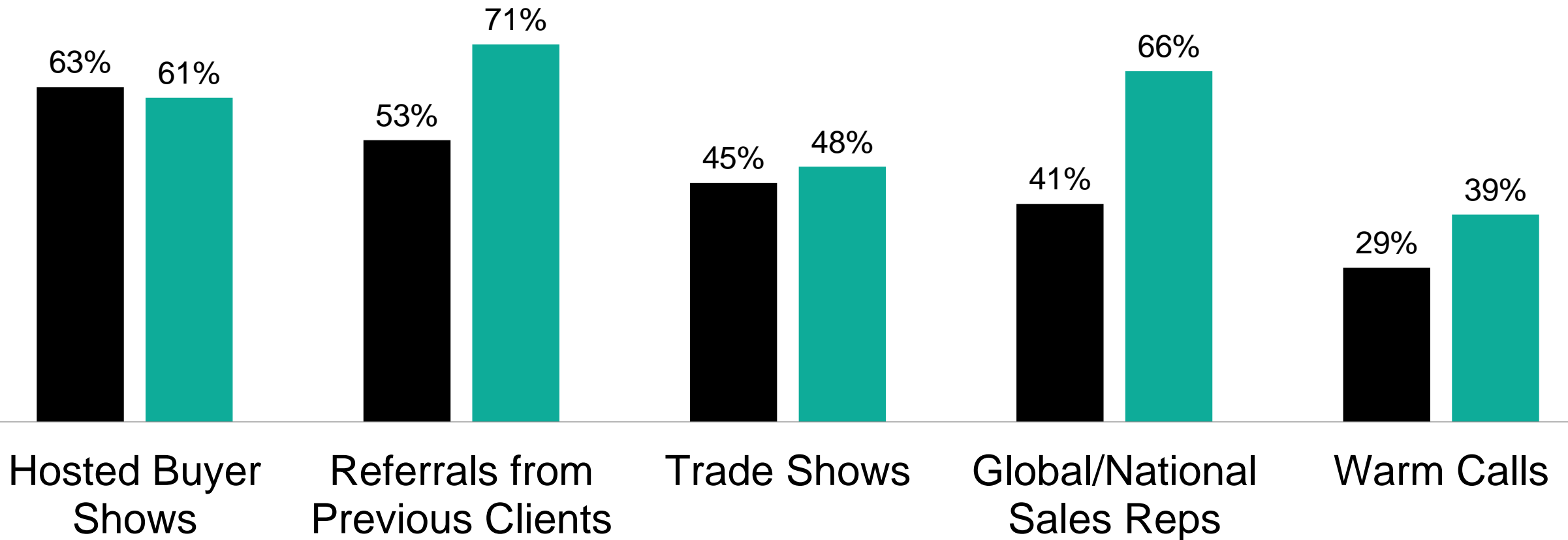
*“I need sales staffs that can actually answer my questions **without passing me off.**”*

Stage 1: Discovering the Right Properties

Discovering New/Potential Venues

% of Each Group that Views the Approach As “Effective”

■ Planner ■ Hotelier



On Hosted Buyer Shows

“I like that I didn’t need to spend time educating them about my business. I don’t like being forced into making appointments with vendors or hotels that are an unlikely match for my needs. Not all hosted buyer programs are created equal.”

—Laura Yates, president
Dovetail Event Partners

Stage 2: Working Through RFPs

Top 5 Things Planners Can Do to Help Hoteliers

- 1** Provide Your Priorities
 - Be Clear on Room Rate/ Budget Targets/Hot Buttons/ Deal Breakers
- 2** Provide Information on your Attendees
 - Don't Cast Too Wide of a Net – Short RFP First
- 3** Provide goals/objectives for their programs
 - Be Clear on Objectives
- 4** Fully review and/or respond to RFP
- 5** Have a clear concept of venue needs
 - Be Realistic and Understand Invested

Top 5 Things Hoteliers Can Do to Help Planners

- 1** Fully read responses
 - Communications: Detailed, Timely, Personalized
- 2** Ask questions re: program goals
- 3** Understand their priorities
- 4** Ask about audience
- 5** Be creative and flexible

In their words..

“Please read my entire RFP before calling to ask me a bunch of questions. It comes across as rude or a lack of caring when a sales manager calls to ask something that is plain of day on the RFP. We put a lot of time into pulling as much info as possible into the RFP to help you get all the info you need from the start. Please don't assume it's missing something and not even read it.”

In their words..

*“I think hoteliers will continue to try to shave off costs by using electronic RFPs rather than manually reaching out. The hotel industry needs **to get back to service rather than speed** and rote answers.*”

*“We are moving faster and faster and depending in technology mire and more. We **don't have time for lengthy phone calls** to discuss program requirements with every hotel.”*

One Planners on RFPs

*“Call me ‘Old School’ but **I prefer to send customized event details to an actual human** rather than making my meeting details fit into a pre-determined set of boxes and sending it off into the abyss. Not to mention that in this current environment, meetings are being boiled down to numbers. In some cities, to give my meeting a fighting chance at getting preferred space, I need to rely on relationships.”*

—Meghan Schilt, CMP, events manager
King & Spaulding

Stage 3: Choosing the Right Property

How Planners Chose Their Current Properties



In their Words. . .

*“Reps at [larger brands] are overloaded and overwhelmed with too many hotels to sell. **I prefer smaller brands.**”*

“Brands are getting so big, yet they don't split up the territories well enough for reps to keep up. They need more sales reps. Smaller territories.”

Stage 4: How Do Must Trusted Partners Add Value?

Where Each Sides Adds Value

	Planners	Hoteliers
Flawless Execution	#1	#4
Helping Overcome Layout/Location Issues	#2	#5
Timely RFP Response	#3	#2
Providing Fantastic Ideas	#4	#5
Helping Us Prioritize the Budget	#5	#3
Providing a Strong Vision	#6	#1

In their Words. . .

“We need to train hotel sales managers to fully understand hard and soft \$. It costs the hotel pennies on the \$ compared to what it actually costs the client for the same service. Quit nickel and diming me.”

Moving Forward

Alignment on What is Hindering Amazing Programs



Budgets Not
Keeping Up
with Costs

Space/Date
Availability

What Will Impact Relationship? Supplier View

Strong Relationships

Rates
Security **Technology** World Events

The Demands Around Space/Availability

Economy

What Will Impact Relationship? Planner View

Digital Relationships

Budgets/Pricing

Sellers Market will Change

Technology - Less Personal

Terrorism/Security

Mergers

Availability

In their words. . .

*“It's a seller's market right now and it is felt very much on the buyer side with inflexibility. **The market will go back** to a buyer's market eventually and the relationships made during the current economy will help the planners promote specific properties.”*

*“I'm concerned about how long the seller's market will go on making it more **difficult for me to find the right hotels in the right locations**. My meetings are often heavy in meeting space and light in guest rooms and many hotels won't even check dates until very close to the date.”*

In their words. . .

*“I’m concerned about the lack of new properties in the **US**. Worldwide there are new properties but the lack of fresh, innovative, intriguing hotels in the US is a downer.”*

“World events and terrorism are making it difficult for clients to book their events long range.”

What Hoteliers Say About the Future

“The next few years ownership groups are forecasting aggressive budgets and the hotel industry will eventually will start looking like the airline industry. **Commissions will be cut.** There will be additional new service charges added.”

“Planners are still thinking that it's business as usual. **Planners now need to sell their programs to hotels. And put the total value of their program out there.** Identify your must-haves and work with the hotel on executing them.”

“The number one take-away for planners is that companies need **to start thinking further ahead when booking groups.** Availability, especially for larger programs, is definitely narrowing for 2017, 2018 and beyond.”

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What Suppliers Will Be Doing

Suppliers Will:

- Deeper Relationship Investment
- Better Communications (is part of deepening relationship)
- Better Product/Service/Deals