



CHAPTER 1

Planning Is Important

I am currently the national sales manager for a large global manufacturer of medical hygiene products. Each year, our company hosts one of the largest long-term care conferences, with more than one thousand people from around the world attending. This educational conference is held in Poland, which is where our corporate headquarters is located.

In America, we also host an annual sales meeting for our small USA sales team to attend and collaborate with one another for a few days. We discuss sales strategies, sales challenges, industry best practices, and marketing information. This annual sales conference is also a way for our leadership team to thank each salesperson for being a valued member of our sales team.

Our most recent sales meeting was held in the month of February in the great city of Orlando,

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Florida. Two of our colleagues from overseas who work in our German and Poland markets were also invited to attend our USA annual sales meeting. We had agreed that it would be mutually beneficial for all parties to have both domestic employees at the meeting as well as some teammates from abroad.

For anyone who has ever planned a sales meeting for a group, my hunch is that you can easily understand the stress that comes along with the event coordination. Navigating the planning process, which includes determining the location of the event, arranging travel schedules for those flying in from varied parts of the country, figuring out meals each day, deciding on entertainment, selecting sales content for the meeting, printing necessary sales and marketing materials, and examining related costs versus budget, is an undertaking. Every detail must be addressed to ensure a successful sales meeting. This can be compared to planning a wedding, with the big difference being that the sales meeting typically has less lead time.

Planning a sales meeting is never a one-person show. It takes many people to exchange ideas, brainstorm, and collaboratively pay attention to the smallest of details. As the person leading this past year's sales meeting, I felt confident that I had all my bases covered. I was ready. I was prepared. I was excited for my teammates to come to Orlando.

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Plans were made for our sales team members to meet at the selected hotel on a Monday afternoon, check in to their respective rooms, and then attend a dinner event that evening in the hotel's lobby restaurant. This was our sales meeting official "kick-off."

As our two overseas colleagues were arriving the Sunday afternoon prior to the start of our Monday sales meeting, my direct manager and I made plans to pick them up at the airport and have dinner together that Sunday evening. It was our way of getting acquainted with one another ahead of the meeting. The four of us made plans to stay Sunday night at the hotel.

Since I live in Orlando, I volunteered to pick up our two colleagues from the airport and meet my manager at the chosen local restaurant. As I left my house on Sunday afternoon, I kissed my husband goodbye and told him I would text him later to say goodnight. Off I went to the airport, excited, and arriving in plenty of time to pick up my two colleagues.

My manager was driving down from Georgia, and she called me on her way to Orlando. We confirmed that our colleagues' flights were still on time, her drive time was going along as planned, and we reiterated our plan to meet at a waterfront restaurant in Disney Springs.

My two international traveling colleague's plane arrived on time. As they exited customs, we exchanged greetings, collected their luggage from the baggage

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carousel, located my car in the parking garage, paid the parking attendant, and drove to the restaurant as planned. All was going smoothly without any hiccups.

As we were eating dinner together later that evening, I received a text from my husband, along with a picture of a bug.

“I’m sleeping on the couch tonight,” he said. “We have bedbugs. Can you call someone tomorrow if you get a chance?”

Have you ever had a situation when you know you have a big problem with the lack of time to solve it?

I knew immediately we had a big problem. My husband is a teacher with no free time during the day to make calls. We both have our “roles,” so to speak. I’ve always been the one who makes the doctor and dentist appointments as well as the calls to plumbers, electricians, the water department, etc. My husband has always done the cooking, the care of our pool, and the grocery shopping. He has a knack for cleaning out our garage and closets, two things I detest doing, and so we have always worked well together.

For the last week or two, my husband and I had been noticing tiny, disgusting, dark-brown bugs on our white king-size comforter. We had both started thinking they could be bedbugs. Instead, we were holding out hope that perhaps they were dust mites or fleas from our precious cat Penny, or a host of other

types of bugs. Any alternative to bedbugs!

As I read the text from my husband confirming bedbugs, my heart sank. I had heard horror stories about bedbugs throughout the years. I had heard that they spread like wildfire, that they come out at night, and that they were a pain to get rid of. As I sat at the restaurant table that Sunday evening conversing with my manager and two colleagues, I did my best to remain calm and not let this disturbing news from my husband ruin the evening. After all, there was nothing I could do at that precise moment in time.

From Seller to Buyer

I knew right away, however, that I quickly was now going to be stepping into a new “buyer” role versus my comfortable role as a “seller.” As soon as we got to the hotel and checked in, I dropped my luggage in the room, booted up my computer, connected to my cell phone hotspot, and began my online research into bedbugs. The first step to my solution started with googling pest control companies and looking at their websites to learn more.



SIDE NOTE SALES TIP

***Remain Calm: Understand
the Difference Between
Marketing and Sales***

Having been in sales for thirty-plus years, I strongly believe that remaining calm in situations is a learned skill. When you can remain calm, regardless of if you are a buyer or a seller, you are able to slow your thought process down and avoid having knee-jerk reactions or making rash decisions. In light of receiving a concerning text from my husband confirming bedbugs in our home, remaining calm allowed me to better manage my evening as I knew there was nothing that I could do regarding my current situation at 7:00 p.m. on a Sunday evening.

Remaining calm also helped me gather my thoughts as to the next steps and how I would begin to solve this problem. My first task was researching and locating a company to rid our house of bedbugs. I had a very short deadline while also managing the demands of running the annual sales meeting. I knew that I had limited free time over the next few days to work on this unexpected new project and would need to multitask.

Where do I begin and how do I tackle something that I know so little about? I asked myself. I was now