

The World of k'nekt



Leading the way for your development personally and professionally

Philosophy

SMG believes in developing our employees. We want to provide tools that will help our employees to be better in all aspects of their lives: their work lives and their personal lives. We understand that, in order for training to be valuable, it must be relevant. Our programs focus on life skills. By doing so, we have given people a reason to engage. We believe that, by understanding the purpose in our work and focusing on the “how” of how we deliver service, the outcome is improved for all. This philosophy underscores the format and materials in all our programs. Creating a great guest, customer and employee experience takes creativity and must be multidimensional. We all win when we feel good about the job we are doing and how we are doing it.

Even the name we have chosen for our programs, [k'nekt](#), exemplifies how we feel about it. “We are all in this together.” All of our behaviors impact each other. Every aspect of our industry is people-centric: entertainment and sporting events, meetings, conferences and social events. We needed to design programs exclusively for our unique requirements. We understand the importance of hospitality and quality of service, of increasing sales and driving revenues, of always looking to exceed guest, client and customer expectations.

Methodology

Making training engaging and relevant to the adult learner is critical in order for it to be effective. SMG takes this theory one step further in every training program. Not only are all of the messages and skills pertinent for the success of the employees at their jobs, many of the lessons taught are also relevant to personal interactions. Employees engage and incorporate concepts when they see value. By showing value beyond the workplace, employees embrace and take ownership of the training. Each program includes the following:

- Professionally delivered training utilizing industry experts and/or nationally recognized speakers
- A blend of media that is current and engaging
- Messages and skills that are directly applicable to work and often personal lives
- Versatile skills that allow the learner to internalize and personalize for a more genuine application and delivery
- Current topics that address the fast-paced, digital world we operate in
- Customized programs that significantly improve results

k'nekt Training Programs

AN INTRODUCTION TO CUSTOMER SERVICE AND THE SMG STORY

The SMG story begins by recognizing that there is a purpose to our work, not simply tasks to be performed. The first training program in the k'nekt portfolio is meant for all new hires and temporary employees. It is a cutting-edge training video explaining the company's philosophy. Each SMG core beliefs is explored in a way that the individual employee understands how he or she is part of the success of the company. By the end of the 17-minute video, employees understand that at SMG:

- **We Engage** our customers by making a great first impression through our body language and facial expressions.
- **We Celebrate** our affiliation with the SMG team by presenting ourselves professionally and wearing our uniform with pride.
- **We Entertain** our guests by acting as a host of events and ensuring that each and every guest has a positive experience.
- **We Amaze** our patrons by going above and beyond to really WOW them. Satisfied guests aren't good enough. . . we want to amaze them.
- **We k'nekt** when we focus on our purpose and our core beliefs. We "k'nekt" with our customers to build loyalty and ultimately success for all.

*"We have had several other SMG customer service training sessions administered in previous years but none can compare to the outstanding interactive and comprehensive training seminar put on by k'nekt earlier this month. The energy and charisma of the k'nekt trainer, Katie Wells, connected with our SMG employees at the Times Union Center. At the end of the class several employees commented that this customer service training was **the best one they have ever attended.**"*

Bob Belber, Regional General Manager
Times Union Center, Albany, NY

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Once employees have been trained in their specific jobs, they are encouraged to attend a half-day, interactive program further exploring the skills of customer service. A blend of live facilitation and captivating multimedia is tailored specifically for each individual facility. Our employees engage because they see relevancy. We show them how the skills they learn have application in their personal lives as well as their business lives. The skills taught are centered around SMG's core beliefs.

We Engage:

- Initiate eye contact
- Maintain positive body language
- Properly shake hands

We Celebrate:

- Excellent personal grooming
- Professional dress
- SMG attire guidelines

We Entertain:

- Take ownership of situations
- Handle challenges

We Amaze:

- Go above and beyond so our guests have an amazing experience

Target Audience – All employees

K'NEKT ADVANCED CUSTOMER SERVICE

This offering takes a deeper dive into the subtleties of serving and working with our internal and external customers. While our original customer service class focuses on the fundamentals of customer service, the advanced class focuses on the nuances of service to amaze our customers. As with all k'nekt offerings, this training addresses both the employees work world and personal world.

- Explores the 5 Cs of Communication: Context, Clusters, Congruence, Consistency and Culture
- Reading + Representing ourselves through non-verbal communication.
- In dealing with difficult situations, teaches 5 steps to problem resolution
- Helpful phrases + phrases to avoid

FUNDAMENTALS OF LEADERSHIP

This course addresses the core skills necessary for effective leadership. Communicating expectations and providing feedback based on observable behaviors are some of the key concepts. Specific departmental goals and objectives are incorporated for immediate results. Participants will be able to:

- Effectively communicate expectations for all employees
- Create a plan and/or schedule to observe employees' performance
- Provide feedback based on performance
- Communicate observable behaviors for reinforcement and correction
- Establish accountability in each department

Target Audience - All supervisors, managers, directors of all departments that supervise employees

SALES I – THE CONSUMMATE SALES PROFESSIONAL

The main focus of this intensive 3-day session is to arm the SMG sales person with the right tools to convert potential business into booked business. This program encompasses all aspects of the sales job, teaching interactive selling points, etiquette and protocol, networking, online communication, letters and proposal writing. The course is led by two extremely experienced hospitality executives and calls on some of the field's top experts to share their experience and knowledge with the trainees. Speakers include a nationally recognized etiquette expert who has appeared on national broadcast programs such as Dr. Phil and Oprah, professors from the College of Charleston's Tourism and Hospitality Management division and Executives from SMG.

Within the training program, the following are reviewed:

- Correctly opening the sales call
- Querying the customer with the right questions to discover pertinent information
- Describing the SMG product in terms of customer benefits
- Overcoming objections
- Confidently quoting prices and closing the sale
- Presenting ourselves with polish
- Social Media

Target Audience – All Sales, Catering and Event Management personnel who have responsibility for booking business into a SMG facility as well as leaders who oversee the sales role



SALES II – ADVANCED SELLING TECHNIQUES

Whereas Sales I focuses on the reactive selling process, Sales II takes that to the next level. Participants work on extensive evaluation of business opportunities and the different buyers within that opportunity. It is a complex approach to assessing customers' buying styles and presenting offerings that best influence and persuade those styles. Participants will apply the theory presented to current business opportunities. They will also develop action plans that support this theory in order to persuade future customers. Additionally, participants explore the proactive portion of sales: prospecting. Sources for new business, effective strategies and necessary action plans are all developed in order to ensure a constant flow of business. Participants learn to:

- Gather and synthesize necessary information to fully assess a business opportunity
- Assess customers' buying styles and select an approach that best persuades each style
- Offer solutions to customers that provide value and show results based on the customers' business objectives
- Organize information and deliver presentations (including proposals) that persuade different types of buyers and influencers
- Identify the purpose/need for prospecting
- Establish a unique system that ensures frequent and effective prospecting calls
- Identify sources relevant to specific market segments
- Identify critical information needed before attempting to contact a prospect
- Create a compelling opening statement and questioning strategy that will entice different prospects
- Recognize challenges when making prospecting calls and respond to typical customer objections on a prospecting call

Target Audience – All Sales, Catering and Event Management personnel who have attended Sales I – The Consummate Sales Professional and/or have attended a similar sales program demonstrating the foundation of selling skills as well as leaders who oversee the sales role

SALES III – SALES ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP

SMG understands that companies that embrace a sales culture are the most successful in any industry or marketplace. Infusing a sales culture throughout the organization begins with leadership, measurements and accountability. This training has many components that support the accountability model.

- Developing a comprehensive Marketing Plan that incorporates specific nuances of the facility, the marketplace, the competition and stakeholder expectations
- Establishing team and individual measurements per market segment, per year that directly link to the facility's initiatives, budget and market expectations
- Developing and executing sales strategies that support the team and individual sales (revenue) goals
- Developing an efficient sales team by coaching sales people on sales skills, strategies and account management
- Implementing measurement tools to track team and individual performance
- Enneagram Personality Profile

Target Audience – All Sales, Catering and Event Management leaders who have responsibility for overseeing the business booked into a SMG facility

“SMG’s corporate k’nekt programs have made a huge difference in how our company is perceived by our Contract Administrator and our County Commission in Broward County. When our sales training certificate program was announced through the College of Charleston it truly made the value difference for our company against any and all competitors.

For those of us who rose to our current positions from the sales and marketing discipline the introduction of k’nekt has made us a better company all around and a company that understands the importance of finding and booking new business for our buildings through better sales techniques, and then keeping our customers happy through superior customer service. Our Contract Administrator could not be happier, and with her full support Broward County just signed SMG to another 10-year operating contract.”

Mark Gatley, Regional General Manager
Broward County Convention Center, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

EVENT MANAGEMENT

The Event Management Program details the key responsibilities of this critical function. It addresses all the elements of the Event Manager's role from file management and ownership, to contract understanding and enforcement, program closure and payment, upselling opportunities, handling difficult guests, and pre-/post-convention meeting protocol. It also addresses the importance of professional polish and instructs in this key area.

- Persuasion skills to drive revenue
- Pre-/Post-convention effectiveness
- Challenging/unique situations
- Effective turnover
- Interdepartmental communication
- Presenting ideas for improvement
- Social media
- Professionalism 24/7 – dress for success
- Best Practices – BEOs, resumes, complex diagrams
- The life cycle of events

Target Audience – All Catering and Event Management personnel who have responsibility for overseeing the service delivery of programs booked into a SMG facility as well as leaders who are responsible for events

PROMOTING ARENAS AND SUCCESSFUL EVENTS

Marketing arenas is more than ticket sales. Promoters expect complex media strategies and significant guidance in-market in order to make a show successful. Additionally, suite sales, naming rights, and advertising may also be the responsibility of the sales and marketing representatives in the arenas. This course has value for stadium and theater marketers as well. The course covers the following topics for arenas specifically:

- Media buying
- Social media
- Public relations
- Managing promoters
- Grass-roots marketing
- Strategic prospecting
- Effective selling skills
- Compelling advertising
- Overcoming objections and resistance

Target Audience – All arena, stadium and theater marketing personnel

k'nekt CULINARY FOR SAVOR FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Culinary k'nekt includes training and information sharing for Executive Chefs and the Food and Beverage Directors. Special attention is given in the following areas:

- Embracing and integrating green initiatives into the kitchen and ensuring that guests are aware of the unique attributes SAVOR Food Service offers
- Recipe suggestions and idea sharing
- Technical training in banquet service
- Food safety
- Alcohol awareness
- Concept design
- Trends and new technologies

Target Audience – All SAVOR Executive Chefs and Food and Beverage Directors

SALES I WITH SAVOR ENHANCEMENTS

A 4-day session utilizing food and beverage-specific topics, examples, role plays, etc. This program is offered to SAVOR employees to allow for food-and-beverage-specific content and networking. In addition to the core Sales I curriculum, the following topics are added:

- Stakeholders
- Competitive food and beverage environment
- Community participation
- Brand consistency
- Taking ownership of all food and beverage opportunities, not just contracted
- Internal resources
- Trends

Target Audience – All SAVOR personnel who have responsibility for booking business into a facility as well as SAVOR leaders who oversee the sales role



SALES ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT WEBINAR

When customers contact a sales office, it is not unusual to initially speak to an Administrative Assistant. That first point of contact can make or break a sale, so providing training to this audience is necessary to accomplish the following:

- Understand the importance and value of business opportunities that are handled in the sales office
- Understand their role in the success of the sales process
- Manage the call (or walk-in customer) in a way that efficiently gets the customer to the right person
- Effectively explain necessary information to customers when directing them to the next step of the sales process

Target Audience – All Sales, Catering and Event Management personnel who have responsibility for answering inquiry calls and supporting the sales department

SOCIAL MEDIA WEBINAR

The world of social media is ever changing and can be overwhelming. This webinar gives an overall understanding of the business application of social media. The philosophy and general guidelines for navigating the most common platforms are explained and effective tools and apps are shared. Participants will:

- Understand the value of social media
- Learn the uses of the most popular platforms
- Discover effective tools and apps to become more efficient at social media

Target Audience - All personnel that have input for, or access to, social media at their facility

LEADERS WEBINAR

Periodic briefings for managers and leaders in sales, food & beverage (SAVOR) and event management. Reviews direction and materials (checklists, standards, etc.) supplied in the various training programs. Helps ensure utilization.

Target Audience - Managers and leaders in sales, food and beverage and event management

EXTERNAL ATTENDEES

The success of many of the training programs has prompted external employees to attend. When employees of major hotel chains and convention and visitors bureaus' request to attend SMG training, it proves that the content, delivery and skills taught are in high demand, and highly successful.

Training Measurements

SMG recognizes that training is only beneficial if it provides results. Quantifying the effectiveness of training is a difficult task in any industry, especially with personal interaction skills. However, SMG is able to measure results and training effectiveness in a variety of ways. By gathering data from different sources, the collective feedback indicates that the training programs are not only successful but ultimately effective for the facilities and produce results for the company as a whole.

External Measurements

MYSTERY SALES SHOPS

The Sales I – Consummate Sales Professional training is supported and monitored with mystery shop calls to recognize if learned skills are being maximized. Extensive scenarios are built and presented to sales people in order to measure their ability to convert the sale. Training experts provide written and verbal feedback as well as suggest new techniques to the sales managers as a means of evaluation.

ONLINE POST-EVENT EVALUATIONS

A cost-effective measurement of customer satisfaction. Externally generated instruments from firms such as Mind Share have been developed and are utilized. Also facility-generated instruments using Survey Monkey are utilized.

Internal Measurements

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Each classroom training session gathers feedback from participants. This feedback measures a culture of learning, retention, new skills and changed behaviors applicable to the training provided. All aspects of the training are measured and assessed. Evaluations are tallied and adjustments are made to the content when necessary. Consistently, the evaluations average 9.3-9.7 on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being considered outstanding.

SUCCESS MEASUREMENTS

Additionally, SMG seeks and documents proof sources directly attributable to class attendance of program effectiveness such as individual promotions, success at securing business, management and/or client testimonials.

“The SMG K’nekt Training was very beneficial for me as a CVB sales person. I feel that more CVB sales people should attend this class. This will allow them to bridge the perceived sales gap that is traditional between so many CVBs and Convention Centers.”

Shun Hatten, Vice President of Sales - Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Jackson, MS

“Thank you again for the valuable training. I have been implementing the techniques we learned in my everyday sales practices and I’ve found my sales revenue has increased.”

Linda M. Jones, CMP, Sales Manager - Pennsylvania Convention Center

