

PROBLEM SOLVER

Gillis Sales offers hotel sales solutions

LAUNCHED IN 2013, Gillis Sales provides remote sales support for hotels operating without an on-property sales team. This extra help allows hotels to better compete in their local markets and pull a greater share of the available business. The company partnered with the IHG Owners Association as a Silver Allied Member last year, then quickly upgraded its membership to Gold following an overwhelmingly positive response from Association members who expressed interest in their solutions. *OWNER* spoke with Tammy Gillis, founder and CEO of Gillis Sales, about the company's partnership with the Association and how COVID-19 has impacted hospitality sales.

● **What sales expertise does Gillis bring to the table?**

We have brought a solution to the market that makes sales accessible and achievable for hotel owners who do not have—or do not need—a full-time seller. Our turnkey sales team has extensive IHG® brand experience, which allows us to ramp up quickly and hunt for business in their local market.

● **What was the state of hotel sales pre-COVID?** The industry had experienced 10 straight years of RevPAR growth and there was a wealth of demand generators providing revenue to hotels. Sellers did not have to look too far for business and a lot of their time was spent managing incoming leads rather than hunting for new business. In this current environment, which is seeing a lot of scarcity, sellers are having to find new sources of revenue and hunt for business in segments where they may not have experience or existing relationships.

● **How has COVID-19 impacted your strategy?** When most of the world stopped traveling in early March, we had to identify new demand generators and quickly pivot to shift business for our clients. We leveraged our relationships across the segments still traveling, such as government,

medical and workforce, and hunted for new business. With this approach, we drove over \$4 million in room revenue for our hotel clients in Q2 and Q3.

● **How else is the pandemic affecting the industry?**

Going forward, everything is fair game. By that I mean that all future business is on the table when companies start traveling again. Hotels need to be proactive and reach out to as many decision-makers as possible to be in a strong position when travel resumes.

The challenge is that many hotels have had to furlough their sales staff or pull them into operations, so they have limited time to look for new sources of revenue. Gillis can be a bridge to provide much-needed sales support and help ramp up occupancy so owners can continue to focus on operations and recovery.

● **How has partnering with the IHG Owners Association affected your business?**

What I value most about being an Allied Member is that it provides an opportunity to engage with members who are innovative and looking for ways to improve their performance. Before the pandemic, the Working Group networking events were a great environment to connect with owners and other Allied Members, discuss industry challenges and develop strategic relationships. The pandemic has meant that we've had to find other ways to connect with owners, like hosting an Association Expert Session. However, personal connections are key. I look forward to getting on the road again next year and forging new relationships.



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