

# 想提高銷售額？用心聆聽！

## Want to sell more? Listen!

伊麗莎白·羅伯茨、伊麗莎白·圖利賈 Elizabeth Roberts and Elizabeth Tuleja

**香**港旅遊業的競爭日益加劇，要成功就要巧用善策以爭取新顧客並留住舊顧客。顧客的差異愈來愈大，又愈來愈精明，要將旅遊產品賣給他們，不僅要徹底分析現行做法，也要推行創新的銷售手法，那樣才能令他們滿意。

旅遊銷售人員現在要面對甚麼難題？二零零五年的一項研究表明，銷售成功與否，關乎五大難題：(1)如何激發銷售人員的潛能；(2)如何創造實際機會；(3)如何克服銷售新產品與新服務的困難；(4)如何以較少人手與資源來增加收入；(5)如何善用顧客資料以制訂銷售策略。

要以最低的成本、最便捷的方法去克服上述難題，究竟有沒有業經證實的方法？有，那就是訓練銷售人員運用**主動聆聽法(active listening)**。這是因為旅遊業的競爭十分激烈，倘若銷售人員受訓後都能有效地聆聽，那公司所提供的服務就會與眾不同，而且這種方法所費不多，兼且功效宏大。有效地聆聽顧客所說的話，還可避免因誤解、舊客他去、甚或訴訟而引致收入下降。

我們雖然都明白有效的聆聽非常重要，但往往卻只聽到自己想聽到的，又或者對說話的人有先入之見，因而不願真正理解他人所說的話。我們大多數人都有聽到聲音的能力，但這並不表示能真正有效地聆聽。有研究指出，大多數管理人員每日用上九成時間去聽上司、顧客、同事說話；而儘管旅遊業的管理人員認為自己的聆聽能力「非常好」，但受僱的員工卻一再認為他們的聆聽能力遠遠達不到那水平。

旅遊業日趨全球化，這使得上述問題更見複雜，因為跨文化溝通本身就有潛存的難關，如語言不通，口音不同，或

In order to achieve success in the increasingly competitive Hong Kong travel industry, it is essential to utilise effective strategies for maximising opportunities for new and repeat business. The ability to successfully sell travel-related products to an increasingly diverse and discerning range of clients requires a thorough analysis of existing practice and the application of innovative sales techniques to enhance client satisfaction.

What are the challenges facing travel sales professionals? A 2005 study identified five of the most difficult challenges related to sales success: (1) leveraging potential of performers; (2) generating qualified prospects; (3) difficulty selling new products and services; (4) increasing revenue with fewer people and resources; and (5) leveraging customer data to drive sales strategy.

What is the proven way to overcome these challenges with minimum effort and cost? Train your sales staff to engage in active listening. Why? Because in the highly competitive travel business, developing your sales staff to listen effectively is an inexpensive but highly effective way to differentiate the level of service which you provide to your clients. Effectively listening to your clients is also a great way to avoid lost revenue which results from misunderstandings, non-repeat business and, in the worst-case scenario, litigation.

While we all recognise the importance of effective listening, it is all too easy to simply hear what we want to hear or to let our preconceived notions about the speaker influence our willingness to really comprehend his or her message. Just because most of us have the physical ability to hear does not mean that we are really effective listeners. Research has shown that most managers spend up to 90% of their day listening to their bosses, their clients and their colleagues, and that while hospitality managers rate their own listening abilities to be "very good", their employees consistently rate their manager's listening skills as considerably less effective.

The increasingly global nature of the travel and tourism industry complicates the matter even further because of the challenges inherent in cross-cultural communication: language barriers, accents or the inability of the listener to decipher slang,

者不理解對方的俚語、術語、慣用語等。加上辦公室內電話、電腦、無線電話、傳真機、影印機、BlackBerry所發出的「外來噪音」，這些聲響再和人的說話聲混雜在一起，那就難怪我們無法停下來集中精神去聆聽顧客所說的話了。

互聯網技術同樣影響了聆聽能力。不錯，對旅遊業而言，網絡銷售確有經濟效益，但千萬不可因而忽略了與顧客、與供應商的關係。長久而穩固的關係建基於相互瞭解和信任。要取得內外顧客的信任(內部顧客就是同事!)，必須先聆聽，瞭解，然後對他們的具體需求作出回應。像中文的「聽」字一樣(見圖)，有效的聆聽需要耳、目、心並用。欠缺其一就不再是聆聽，而只是聽得見罷了。

雖然旅遊公司大多靠電話來處理大部份業務，可是很少公司明白，有效的聆聽即有效的市場銷售。最近有一項研究發現，倘若顧客認為客戶服務員在留心細聽，那他們會更為滿意，而更要緊的，是他們會再次光顧。

那旅遊業的銷售人員怎樣才能提高聆聽能力？要有效地聆聽，第一步要時刻留心，並且主動而又將心比心地聆聽。有研究證明，在銷售過程中若需與顧客接觸，主動兼體念聆聽法(active empathetic listening)比主動聆聽法更有功效。運用主動兼體念聆聽法的好處，是銷售人員能更瞭解顧客眼前的需要，同時日後更名為顧客提供建議。

以下的例子，是在旅遊銷售過程中運用主動兼體念聆聽法的五個步驟：

1. 旅遊銷售人員運用主動兼體念聆聽法去細心聆聽顧客所說的話(瞭解)：「他想乘坐X航空公司的班機前往A市。」
2. 銷售人員將剛聽到的訊息與其他已知的資訊印證，以找出顧客的真正想法(分析)：「因為只有X航空公司才有直航班機去A市，所以他真的很想乘坐X航空公司的航機。」
3. 銷售人員利用相關資料去判斷在這個情況下這個訊息有多重要(評估)：「他想儘快出發！」

jargon or idioms. Throw in all the sources of office "external noise" created by telephones, computers, mobile phones, fax machines, photocopiers, BlackBerry's and people's voices into the mix, and it is no wonder that we have lost the ability to pause, concentrate and listen effectively to our clients.

The role of Internet technology has also affected our ability to listen effectively. While the positive economic effects of web-based marketing for the travel and tourism industry cannot be underestimated, it is important that we do not lose sight of the importance of the client/supplier relationship. Solid, long-term relationships are based on mutual understanding and trust.

In order for your external and internal clients (your colleagues!) to trust you, you first have to listen, understand and respond to their specific needs. As depicted in the Chinese character for "listen" (see Figure), effective listening involves our ears, our eyes and our heart. Eliminate one feature and is it still listening, or just hearing?

Most travel and tourism-related businesses conduct a significant proportion of their business via the telephone, yet few enterprises recognise the connection between listening effectiveness and marketing effectiveness. The findings of a recent study found that the perceived attentiveness of the company representative is a direct driver of encounter satisfaction and, most importantly, repeat business.

So, how can you, as a travel sales professional, improve your listening abilities? The first step to becoming a more effective listener is to raise your awareness and become an active and empathetic listener. Research has shown that active empathetic listening (AEL) is superior to mere active listening in the effective performance of the personal selling process. The benefits of using AEL are that salespeople can better understand customer concerns in the short term and better counsel their customers in the long term.

Here is an example of how the five-step AEL process plays out in a travel sales encounter:

1. Travel sales agents using AEL actively listen to what their customers are saying (understanding): "He wants to fly X Airways to city A."
2. They compare their first impressions of the meaning with other known factors to detect the real meaning (interpreting): "He really wants to fly X Airways because it has direct flights

圖：中文的「聽」字

Figure: The Chinese character for "listen"



4. 銷售人員記住這個訊息及與此相關的情況，留待日後使用(記住)：「他上次坐過X航空公司的班機，很滿意，但不喜歡坐Y航空公司的班機，所以我不會向他介紹Y航空公司。」
5. 銷售人員對顧客作出回應，以示聽到顧客所說的話(回應)：「我可以替你預定明天出發的X航空公司班機。」(口頭或書面回應皆可。)

這意味着管理層聘請能運用主動兼體念聆聽法的員工，或培訓現有員工運用這種方法的話，都會對公司有實質利益。雖然並非所有旅遊銷售都需要與顧客建立緊密關係，但有研究指出，利用聆聽能力去建立和維繫關係的優秀銷售人員，的確為顧客提供了增值服務。

讀者中要是有人不相信的話，不妨試試以下為期三十天的聆聽挑戰。在未來的三十天內，嘗試更主動而又將心比心地去聆聽。停下來，關掉令人分神的「噪音」(包括你不斷轉動的腦筋!)，然後認真聆聽每個你接觸的人。向顧客問具體的問題，看看理解是否正確。將聽到的訊息重新表達一次，看看有沒有弄錯。着眼於顧客的需要，而不是你想從他們身上得到的東西。此外，別忘記效率高未必就是最終目的，優質的顧客關係建基於信任與善意，而這兩者都需要時間培養。這個練習不僅可改善你在事業上的關係，也可留住顧客並建立口碑，從而增加銷售額。

既然激發銷售人員的潛能是世界各地旅遊銷售主管的最大考驗，那主動兼體念聆聽法委實是成本低而又效益高的銷售方法。良好的溝通能力，尤其是聆聽能力，是機構能否有效運作的關鍵。旅遊業競爭激烈，事事都要以顧客為先，要提高顧客的滿意程度並增加利潤，有效的聆聽正是脫穎而出的良方。📌

伊麗莎白·羅伯茨博士(eroberts@baf.msmail.cuhk.edu.hk)、  
伊麗莎白·圖利賈博士(etuleja@baf.msmail.cuhk.edu.hk)  
任教於香港中文大學酒店及旅遊管理學院。

- to the destination."
3. They use relevant information to judge the likely significance of the message in its context (evaluating): "He wants to depart as soon as possible!"
4. They store the message and its ramifications in their memories for use at a later date (remembering): "He was pleased with X Airways the last time he flew it, but he didn't like Y Airways, so I won't suggest that again."
5. They respond to the speakers to indicate that they have been heard (responding): "I can book a seat on an X Airways flight that departs tomorrow." (Responses can take a verbal or written form.)

The implications for management are that hiring staff or training current travel sales staff to practise AEL has real, tangible business benefits. While not all travel sales interactions require a high level of relationship development, researchers found that effective salespeople who use their listening ability to establish and maintain relationships do create added value for their clients.

Still not convinced? Take the 30-day listening challenge. For the next 30 days, become a more active and empathetic listener. Pause, turn down the sources of distracting "noise" (including your racing mind!) and really listen to everyone with whom you come into contact. Ask specific questions of your clients and confirm your understanding. Paraphrase what you have heard to confirm that you have heard the message correctly. Focus on what the client needs, not what you need from them. Also, keep in mind that being efficient may not necessarily be the ultimate aim; quality customer relationships are built on trust and goodwill, which take time. Not only will this exercise improve your professional relationships, it will also increase your travel sales through repeat business and positive word-of-mouth promotion.

Given that the number one challenge facing travel sales managers internationally is leveraging the potential of their performers, AEL techniques are an inexpensive, yet highly effective sales tool. Communication competence, especially listening, is central to effective functioning in organisations. Given the competitive, customer-driven nature of the travel industry, effective listening may be one means of competitive advantage resulting in enhanced service satisfaction and profitability. 📌

Dr Elizabeth Roberts (eroberts@baf.msmail.cuhk.edu.hk) and Dr Elizabeth Tuleja (etuleja@baf.msmail.cuhk.edu.hk) teach at the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.