

Hospitality Salesman's Guide to Football Terms:

As much as I love basketball and although my husband is a college basketball coach (Gig 'Em Aggies!), Football Season is right around the corner and I am very excited...the Gridiron Season can't get here soon enough!

As a veteran hotelier and a marketing professional that works daily with meeting suppliers, I thought it would be fun to break down some football verbiage and then translate it into what it means in "our world".

Audible: A play called by the quarterback at the line of scrimmage to make a change from the play that was called in the huddle. In our world, this is called a contingency plan/rain out back-out. A great salesperson always has a contingency plan and never books space without having a plan. In regards to weather disasters here is great article:

<http://hospitality.cvent.com/blog/marketing-resorts-on-the-internet-2/severe-weather-contingency-like-a-pro>

Blitz: When an unusual number of defensive players, usually linebackers, go after the quarterback throwing the ball rather than staying in the backfield waiting to see where the quarterback throws it. In our world, when we hear the word blitz, we automatically think of sales blitz! Sales blitz's can be extremely effective if thought out well! Think about unique ways that you can reach customers. For example, when I was on property, I organized an Ice Cream Truck Blitz. We literally rented an ice cream truck for a week and we went around the city from planner to planner (we had told them we would be stopping by at some point on a certain day), calling them to tell them to come down and get some ice cream and letting them know "Here's the Scoop from the ___ Hotel". It was very inexpensive (\$1.00 or so a planner for the ice cream) and it made a memorable impact. If you are going to be doing a blitz, you have a plan of who you are going to attack, why you are going to attack and how you will measure the results. You cannot expect yourself or your sales team to just hit the streets and office buildings scouring for business.

Defense: Man-To-Man (each member of the defensive team is designated to guard a particular member of the offensive team) and Zone (each player guards an assigned area rather than a specified opponent). I know that the word "defense" has a negative connotation, but in this example, we are saying that the meeting planner is the defensive player but NOT in a negative way. When a planner is on-site for the meeting, make sure that you are giving her/him attention (man-to-man defense) and also that the entire staff is giving zone defense attention. One of the meeting planners' biggest pet peeves is that they have this great relationship with the sales team during the sales process, but once the event is here and the planner is on-site, the salesperson is nowhere to be seen. In addition to this pet peeve, here is an article that has a few more: <http://co.meetingsmags.com/article/top-five-meeting-planning-pet-peeves>

Draft: The selecting of collegiate players for entrance into the National Football League. In our world, I always think about draft being a rough draft, as in crafting an email. Here is an article I wrote not long ago about how to draft an email and email marketing tips: <http://www.hospitalitynet.org/news/4059974.html>

Dual Threat Quarterback: A quarterback who is skilled at both passing and rushing the ball. These quarterbacks may be difficult to defend against since the defensive team cannot focus on one threat to the exclusion of the other. It is imperative to be a tri threat quarterback! You must know Sales, Marketing, and Revenue Management. HSMAl (<http://www.hsmal.org/home.cfm>) has some great classes/webinars on how to be strong in all of these categories.

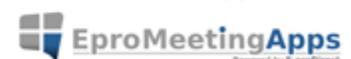
Eligible Receiver: Not all players on offense are entitled to receive a forward pass. Only an eligible pass receiver may legally catch a forward pass, and only an eligible receiver may advance beyond the neutral zone if a forward pass which crosses the neutral zone is thrown. All meeting planners are eligible receivers!! Email & Direct mail marketing is a great way to reach these planners! In all of our case studies, postal mail combined with email has been proven to have the highest ROI of all possible scenarios. However, if you are just looking at email, here is a fun infographic on how to get your emails opened:

http://www.hospitalitynet.org/external/750359883.html?utm_source=360&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Hospitality+Net+360+Thursday+%7C+July+18&utm_content=chaunsea.keller%40eprodirect.com

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Extra Point (PAT): A kick, worth one point, that's typically attempted after every touchdown: You already have the touchdown with the great piece of business you just booked – now go for the PATs with filling in the shoulder days between groups. Don't be afraid to offer incentives (such as the 3rd night at 50% off for a group that has 2 nights peak) to help fill in those small gaps between groups.

Football Jersey: Standard equipment and attire worn by players, which includes the team's color. Do you know how important your team's color is? Take a look at this article and make sure you have the right hue! 10 Colors that Increase Sales and Why: <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/10-colors-that-increase-sales-and-why-0366997>

4th Down Conversion: When attempting to go for it on fourth down and converting, giving your team a new set of downs. This is also known to us as the last day in the end of the quarter. We are all trying everything we can to get just one more contract to keep us alive for the next set of downs (aka: the next quarter). Here is a good article on getting the client to sign: http://www.creativelatitude.com/articles/articles_gee_contracts.html

Hail Mary: Throwing a long pass and hoping for the best. Sometimes, you just have to throw a Hail Mary when you have short term holes that need to be filled in. Sometimes you just have to pull out all of the stops to put heads in beds which may include flash sales sites, opening up the government rate and other non-traditional ways to fill up the house.

The Gridiron: The Field of Play. Think of your hotel as the field of play – are you completely ready for each guest and meeting attendee that walks through the door? Just like the field, the hotel should be manicured perfectly. Meeting Planners are always looking for ways for the field of play to be set up perfectly. Here is a great 39 tip guide for planners to improve their meetings, but as you scroll through it, you will notice a lot of it is on the hotel to have the perfect gridiron: http://www.cimunity.com/fileadmin/uploads/startseite_de/39-ways-to-improve-your-meetings.pdf

Interception/Pick Off: A pass that is caught by a defensive player, giving possession to the team that intercepted it. Take business from your competition! Stay up on the STR reports and readerboards! Here is a great article from Doug Kennedy about standing out from the competition: <http://www.hospitalitynet.org/column/global/154000392/4059948.html>

Offsides: A Foul in which a player is on the wrong side of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Try and reel in your customers! It is very important to draw them in! When you are sending out an email campaign, make sure that you have a "soft" RFP as well as a "hard" RFP. Several times, customers just want more information – they are just coming over to see what is going on – they don't have a hard piece of business yet, but it is your job to get them to come over and check you out. Here is a great infographic from Incite Response (www.inciteresponse.com) & E-proDirect (www.eprodirect.com) about Demystifying Planner Behavior, which shows how important it is to have a Soft RFP: <http://eprodirect.com/directconnect/demystifying-planner-behavior>

Penalty: A sanction called against a team for a violation of the rules, called a foul. Here is a great list of Hotel Salesperson's penalties – don't let the yellow flag ever be thrown on you: http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article42133Good_Salespeople_vs_Bad_Ones_By_Don_Farrell.html

Playbook: A Huge Binder that has all of the plays in it. What this is in the hotel world is an annual marketing plan. You can always tell when the DOSM is working on the annual plan. It means the door is closed and he/she is inaccessible for about 2 weeks. One of the more critical components of the playbook is for hotels to know their target audience. Also, they must understand the marketing channels available to reach that audience with the right message at the right time. Here is a fun infographic that includes where the primary concentration of planners are throughout the country:

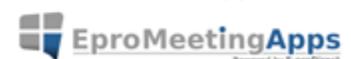
http://froomzblog.com/2013/07/08/fun-facts-about-the-meeting-event-planner-industry/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_content=790675

For a more detailed breakdown with complete state and market segment, check out: <http://eprodirect.com/directconnect/database>

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Pump Fake: A move the quarterback uses to deceive the defense by moving his arm in a throwing motion in the direction of a receiver, but holding onto the ball and drawing it back to throw in another direction or area of the field. Sometimes you have to fake out your competition and your own hotel staff. Go undercover and stay at your hotel and the competitor's hotel(s). This will really help you in knowing what it is like to be a guest at your hotel and then how to sell against those properties. Here are some other tips on how to become a better salesperson in the industry: <http://hmghotelsblog.com/2013/06/18/how-to-become-a-better-sales-person-in-the-hospitality-industry/>

Salary Cap: The maximum amount of money that a team can spend on player salaries in a given year. How fun is this chart that shows anonymous hotel salaries: http://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/hotel-sales-salary-SRCH_KO0,11.htm

I could go on and on about the parallel terms, but I have to have time to research my next fantasy team and to get ready to set up a fun survival football pick league in E-proDirect's 1st Annual Pick-Em tournament! Come join us! For more information, please click here: http://eprodirect.com/mailler/epro_football_august2013/

If you don't believe that there is similarities in football and sales, then guess again! Here are some of the greatest quotes of all times from Vince Lombardi about life, sales, success, etc. <http://www.vincelombardi.com/quotes.html>. If you continue to follow all of the above tips and focus on your offense, you will be hoisting up your own Vince Lombardi Sales Trophy in no time!

Chaunsea Keller is Vice President for E-proDirect. She has over 16 years experience in the hospitality sales and marketing field. In Her role with E-proDirect, it allows her to see daily interaction between suppliers and planners; therefore, is a good gauge on the meetings industry as a whole. She resides in College Station, TX with her husband and two children.

E-proDirect is a consulting firm for the hospitality and events industry. They provide a variety of products including Email marketing which allows the industry suppliers to reach our database of over 80,000 Meeting Planners; MeetingMart which allows the industry suppliers to market their services and products and allows Meeting Planners to research needed suppliers and destinations for their next event; and EproMeetingApps which is a mobile app that can be customized for any meeting or event and/or for a destination to enhance the attendees experience while allowing organizations to generate additional revenue.



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