

Marketing materials don't replace salespeople

I just came back from a quick trip out to Assateague/Chincoteague Islands. As is the case in any tourist/vacation town, everywhere you went there were rows of brochures about things to do: kayaking, boat tours, bike rentals, etc. Those are all good to have. In fact, I ended up going on a boat trip because I picked up a brochure for it.

On Sunday, I was at the visitor center on Assateague. They have lots of exhibits about the area, its history and its flora and fauna. You could pretty much wander around the building looking at exhibits and picking up brochures. However, you would have probably not really noticed or paid attention to the fact that nature bus tours leave from the center.

While talking to the woman at the information desk about trails and things to do on Assateague, she recommended taking the bus tour. She said that you would see the famous Chincoteague ponies, guaranteed, and also lots of other animals native to the area. You would be sitting in air conditioned bus going where nobody else is allowed to drive. In other words, she sold the tour. (BTW, we did see the ponies and a bald eagle, along with tons of egrets, ibis, osprey, and other animals, just like she said)

If she hadn't given the pitch for the tour, it would have not been on my agenda or even on my radar. A posting about the tour or a brochure alone would not have been sufficient. A knowledgeable salesperson made the difference.

When you can't have a salesperson, you need marketing materials. But marketing materials should never replace salespeople completely.