



Eliminate Bad Habits

7 Steps to Overcome your 'A Place For Mom' Addiction

By Susan Saldibar

If you're an owner/operator in the senior living space, you're probably very familiar with online lead providers like 'A Place For Mom'. Maybe you're even using them. After all, they make it seem so easy. But as we all know, easy is rarely best.

But come on, isn't "addiction" a strong word? Not according to Tom Goldman, COO of [SoftVu](#), a Senior Housing Forum partner.

I caught up with Tom recently and asked him why some senior living operators are so convinced that sites like A Place For Mom are important for finding residents. "It's because APFM has done a fantastic job convincing you, the senior living operators, that they are indispensable....so much so that some of you barely even wince anymore, writing those HUGE checks," Tom tells me. "But the truth is, there is a better way; and it's already being used in other industries that leverage online leads."

According to Tom, there is this sense, with online lead referral companies like A Place For Mom, that you 'have it covered' when it comes to building a lead pipeline. But, many are beginning to wake up and realize, you don't.

Another serving of acute residents, anyone? Here ya go.

Tom points out something else you might not have thought about. The A Place For Mom model works better if they find more acute residents for you. Why? Because they will get the opportunity to refill that bed even sooner. "The whole method is fundamentally stacked against those who provide care and in favor of the online lead provider. That just isn't fair or right, in my opinion," he explains.

SoftVu has disrupted a vicious cycle with ground-breaking SeniorVu.

"SeniorVu, SoftVu's senior living solution, fixes a system that online lead providers like A Place for Mom love, and communities hate," says Tom. SeniorVu is geared to long term community success because it lets the operator pick and choose the lead information for the future residents they want. And, what's behind kicking any habit? Taking control!

So, yes, your “addiction” to online lead providers can be overcome. Here are Tom’s 7 steps:

1. Understand that A Place For Mom loves their own model and probably doesn’t care if you don’t.
2. Re-wire your thinking from “more leads are better” to “fewer, but qualified, leads are better.”
3. Really examine your total cost and effort per move-in, including the cost of chasing those bad leads that come from online lead providers.
4. Admit you are probably spending more money than you need to find new residents.
5. Understand that meta-data and sophisticated algorithms exist, are available to you, and can help you find your optimum residents.
6. Look at what other industries do...there are better and cheaper lead generation and nurturing methods in use; and you should be using them, too.
7. Don’t relinquish that last 10-30 % of beds you need to fill to “partners” that make you feel like you “have” to work with them. If they were good partners, you’d want to work with them.

Time to say “I don’t need you anymore.”

The point Tom is making with his “steps” is that there is now technology in place to do the heavy lifting on the front end of lead qualification and nurturing, so senior living marketers don’t have to. It can create and harness a huge volume of meta data and turn it into intelligence. That provides a level of targeting we didn’t have available, even 2 years ago.

“If you’re an operator, you should know that all those residents you think you can only get through A Place For Mom will find you organically, through smarter technology and smarter marketing,” says Tom.

This makes a lot of sense, when you think about it. How long has A Place For Mom been around? Since 2000. That’s sixteen years! And technology has been doing everything but standing still.

As Tom sums it up, “Nothing personal against A Place For Mom. But if I was an operator, I think I’d want to kick that very expensive habit by checking out the new stuff (which has been proven to work in lots of other industries). Then I could spend the money that I save on my residents and staff.”

And, it looks like the 100+ communities who have signed up with SeniorVu since they went ‘live’ two months ago, agree.



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