



Tips to Get Reviews That Could Double Your Inquiries or Move-ins!

By Pam McDonald

Denise Graab, director of industry marketing for [Caring.com](https://www.caring.com) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) reminds me that every year they release [their "Caring Stars" list](#), featuring the senior living communities and in-home care agencies with the best and most consumer ratings and reviews. For 2017, 254 senior living communities and 142 home care agencies from 44 states made the list.

With about 3 million unique visitors each month, Caring.com is the largest online resource for people considering a move to senior living, and has collected more senior care reviews than anywhere else online.

Becoming a Caring Star

The first requirement for becoming a “Caring Star of 2017” is a high volume of reviews (at least 10) with an average overall rating of 4.5 or higher, including a 5-star review in the current year. That means the 2017 “Caring Stars” in senior living amassed an impressive 2,540 reviews – at a minimum.

A number of surveys have revealed the value of these reviews to consumers. For example, 48% of one survey’s respondents said they trusted senior care websites more than general review sites like Yelp (12%) or social sites like Facebook (2%).

A 2012-2013 study looked at senior living community listings with reviews vs. those without reviews, and found that [those with reviews got up to 14 times more inquiries](#) than those without them.

Information from Caring.com’s database in 2014- 2015 showed that assisted living and memory care communities with the “Caring Stars” award got [twice as many consumer inquiries and move-ins](#) on average than Caring.com partner listings without the award.

So how are these communities succeeding at getting such great reviews online?

One of the 2017 “Caring Stars” winners said he was initially inspired by [a "content spark" idea](#) from Denise. It recommended hosting an event to teach residents how to post online reviews. The company held these events at all three of their communities, and two of the three earned the Caring Stars 2017 award: The Villas at Houghton and The Villa at Green Valley.

Tips For Getting Great Reviews

Denise shared additional tips for getting great reviews online:

- **Take advantage of the "honeymoon period"** – Some of the review websites offer review postcard submissions. Insert one of those postcard forms into your Welcome Packet of residents who are thrilled to be moving in.
- **Proactively outreach to your biggest fans** – You know which of your cognitively healthy residents and their family members are most pleased with your services. Send them an email and follow up by phone or in-person to see if they'd be willing to review you on a site like Caring.com.
- **Consider using your community's newsletter** – Dodge Park Rest Home has a monthly newsletter, and includes their Caring Stars award on the cover and inside the edition. They also include articles asking for participation in reviews or consumers choice contests, such as [their most recent edition](#) (page 15) in which they want to be voted "best" in their local newspaper.
- **Read your favorite or recent 5-star review(s) aloud at your community's resident Happy Hour or another celebratory event** – Ask residents to add their positive feedback as well, to help other older adults to find your great community too.

Denise points out that other ideas were offered in an August webinar about online reviews and how to make the most of this opportunity, including an entire section about generating reviews. The webinar [slides are online](#).



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