



How You Can Deal With The “It’s Instant Gratification or I’m Outta Here!”

By Pam McDonald

Everyone knows the stereotypical member of the Millennial generation (born from 1982 to 2004) has a short attention span, searches for information online, and demands instant gratification. But they aren’t the customer for senior living, so providers can carry on doing business the old way, right?

Wrong. What people want when they are searching online for information about senior living and care – and how they want it – is changing. And, according to Katie Roper, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Caring.com: As go the Millennials, so goes the world.

Caring.com, a Senior Housing Forum partner, has the largest collection of senior care reviews online and gets about 3 million unique visitors each month from people who are considering a move to senior living; most are members of the Boomer generation.

But, as Katie points out, “Boomers are increasingly behaving like stereotypical Millennials, meaning they want instant gratification online on their smart phones (or tablets), and they want to be in control of all interaction.”

According to a post on the Engage: Boomers blog, this is a “societal mindset shift . . . that is permeating the entire culture and influencing consumer behavior across the generational spectrum.”

The post’s author noticed how his own online behavior was becoming very un-Boomer-like. He says, “I’ve come to expect convenience, ultra-quick response and immediate gratification. I insist on having options. I question traditional authority figures.”

Katie observed that Senior Housing Forum publisher Steve Moran (also a Baby Boomer) recently wrote about his frustrations with the lack of information available online when he was trying to quickly find a temporary placement for his mom: [The Industry Should Never Complain About Referral Fees Until They Fix This](#)

Katie notes that Steve was looking for pricing and room availability at an assisted living or skilled nursing facilities near his home. While information like this can easily be found online for hotels, airlines, cruise ships, trains, etc., it wasn’t there for senior housing. Steve had to call individual communities and, typically, wait for salespeople to get back to him at their earliest convenience.

Katie's emphatic response: As Boomers come to behave more like Millennials, you better be contacting them at THEIR earliest convenience – and that means putting your pricing information on your website and answering the phone when they call.

“Unless your community shows up on P.1 of Google search; provides pricing, availability, and consumer reviews; and you have someone available all the time to respond to phone calls and email messages, you'd better make sure you're using a third-party like us because that's what people expect nowadays.

“It's one of the big reasons that people searching for senior care call a company like Caring.com. We answer the phone immediately and then transparently explain to the caller how much senior housing will cost . . . It is hard and expensive to do well and we think it is only fair that our partners compensate us for the work we do.”



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