



Why They Don't Care if You Treat Residents "Like Family"

By Susan Saldibar

What comes to mind if someone says "Disney"? Family-oriented, stellar quality, cutting edge, creative, rich history. How about "McDonald's"? Burgers, inexpensive, reliable, convenient, trusted, consistent. It's why parents breathe a sigh of relief when the Disney castle comes up on the screen. And it's why you can count on biting into the same Big Mac whether you're in L.A. or London. It's called "brand" and, oh yes, it matters.

Now turn the magnifying glass on your community's brand. What would citizens of your local township say about you? What characteristics of your community truly make it unique? And, does what you say on your brochures jive with what your salespeople say, and what your employees say, and what your digital advertising says about your community?

What is your brand anyway? Does it need "refreshing"?

Brand matters in senior housing more than ever. But the truth of the matter is that many senior living community operators fail to create a strong brand for their communities, let alone weave it into everything from website to "leave behind" brochures.

[Sage Age](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) recently published a rather eye-opening article on the topic of "brand refreshing". It makes points that marketers may know, but continue to struggle with when it comes to capturing "brand" and then pushing out consistent messaging around it.

If that sounds like you, you might want to stop and evaluate whether or not your community brand needs a refresher. Here's why you might, according to the experts at Sage Age:

1. You're behind the times. It happens to the best brands: you turn around one day, and your logo, colors and everything else just feels outdated. Brands should, however, reflect the times in which we find them. So if you look at your logo and related branding and think it looks like something straight out of the 80s, it might be time for a refresh.
2. You're inconsistent and confusing. If the logo on your stationery and letterhead doesn't match the logo on your website, or if the colors you use range from robin's egg blue to cobalt to turquoise, it is worth taking the time to refresh for consistency's sake. Consistency in branding is key to building trust with your audience.
3. You have news to share. Is your product and community offering different now from what it was when you first developed your logo and related branding? If so, it might be that your logo and brand image is inconsistent with who you are today. In that case, a refresh makes good sense.
4. Your audience is confused, or you aren't reaching them at all. If your logo doesn't seem to be resonating with the audience it needs to resonate with, that's a strong indicator that it could be a good time to examine things with a fresh eye.

No one cares if you treat your resident "like family". Unless you can prove you do it better.

Reading number 4 above, makes me think of how easily "brand" can get diluted. Here's an example. So many senior living communities are quick to tout their "personal care" and how they "treat residents like family" as their brand call outs.

As a consumer myself, those statements seem easy to make and yet hard to prove. They may be much more compelling if you can further define what makes your "personal care" better than anyone else's and ways in which you "treat residents like family" that stand out from the rest who make similar claims. If you can't, you'll end up with a diluted brand that does little to separate your community from the competitor down the street. If ever there was a case for a brand refresher, I'd think that would be a good one.

So, assuming you do need a brand refresher, what to do next? The good news is that Sage Age has some great suggestions, and you can read them all [here](#).

As the Sage Age article so sagely notes, however, "Refreshing your brand is an exciting proposition, but it shouldn't be done just for the heck of it. Your brand is a living, breathing thing, and keeping it fresh and exciting is important, but a refresh should be done within the proper context."

Good advice. If you've got a fantastic brand, don't mess with it. But if you're not so sure, you can read the full article [here](#).



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