



Can You Guess What CCRC's, Assisted Living and Independent Living Communities Have in Common?

By Susan Saldibar

I recently caught up with Bob Wilgus, Director of Marketing and Strategic Digital Communications, for LeadingResponse (a Senior Housing Forum partner).

Recently, while talking with an operator for a CCRC (Continuing Care Retirement Community), Bob was struck by how similar their challenges are to those of the assisted living operators and, yes, even independent living community operators he'd spoken with. They all want the same thing: a healthy mix of short, mid and long term resident prospects.

The key is to get your prospects sitting in front of you. Nothing compares to face time.

The solution, according to Bob, is also the same: Get more “face time” with prospects. You can agree or disagree with this, but it's certainly something I've heard from others as well. The challenge, however, is that you can't get quality face time with hundreds upon hundreds of prospects in your database. You need to narrow the field. And Bob has some ideas on how to do that, too.

3 Key Components To Building a Consistent Pipeline of Qualified Prospects:

1. **Start with the right list.** Okay, you know that. But do you really? There is much more to data than age, household income and zip code. Technology has given us the ability to collect more data and integrate it in a way that provides amazing granularity. So you need to work with a marketing partner that knows their way around “big data” and how to turn it into meaningful intelligence. You'll end up with far better quality leads.

2. **Devise timely and contextual messaging in your marketing.** Engage with them using messaging that fits who they are and where they are in the decision-making process. A one size fits all message makes a lot of (incorrect) assumptions. Use it and you will find your marketing piece in the bottom of the trash barrel. To avoid this, track consumer response patterns and messages that drive response.
3. **Host offsite community events.** Community events are probably the best way to get face-to-face with prospective residents. And, no matter how much you want to show off your CCRC, independent or assisted living community, the data is clear: offsite events outperform onsite events by a 2-to1 margin. As to the type of event, Bob recommends that it be educational. Hit on topics of interest to your target resident or family of resident. He also noted that LeadingResponse tracks top-performing topics from the campaigns they market for their CCRC, independent and assisted living clients. So, they can give you an edge. Finally, it's important to remember these are exclusive leads. That seems like a much stronger position to be in than purchasing digital leads, in bulk, that you are probably sharing with 5 to 10 other communities in your area.

Your best prospects are the ones you don't have to chase!

“Whether you run a CCRC, assisted living, or an independent living community, you share a common need: a guaranteed way of getting face-to-face with your future residents and their families,” says Bob. “Do these three things consistently and you will be building a healthy funnel that will keep your sales team (and management) happy and your rooms full.”



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