



# How Your Competitors are Getting More Tours

*By Susan Saldibar*

You just had a successful offsite community event.

You spent lots of time and effort on targeted direct marketing, the presentation, choosing the restaurant, the whole nine yards. Your ideal prospects (seniors looking for a local senior living community and their adult children and caregivers) came in, sat down, listened and learned about their options.

But what you do next is critical. It will determine whether you advance these prospects to a formal tour or let them slip through your fingers.

## **Your Community Event “close” and follow-up separates winners from losers.**

Bob Wilgus will tell you that he’s seen way too many leads slip through fingers. And they didn’t have to! Bob is Marketing and Strategic Digital Communications for [LeadingResponse](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner). Bob is passionate about what he does and, apparently, with good reason. He tells me senior living communities using their Offsite Community Event program are seeing an inquiry-to-move-in rate of 8%-10% - their proof their system works.

According to Bob, what you say at the end of your community events and your follow-up of the event is what really separates winners from losers. I asked Bob if he could share some insight as to how to turn those event leads into tours.

## **You are about to get some valuable (and free) advice straight from Bob, so listen up!**

1. **Use the “assumptive close” throughout your presentation.** One of the most powerful techniques in booking more tours is to use this statement 5-6 times during your presentation: “...when you tour our community...” The repetition of that phrase – whether your discussing anything from room options to monthly rent – will make it easier to ASK each attendee to book a tour.
2. **Use event evaluation forms**
  - a. Evaluation forms, filled out before people leave your event will help you in three critical ways:
    - i. Identify attendees needing to make a decision quickly. Your evaluation form should include questions that cover: how long they have been looking for a community, when they are looking to make a decision, if the information given during your presentation addressed all their questions and, if not, what additional questions do they have about senior living options. A quick review of this form will allow your staff the opportunity to set an appointment to tour and address their additional questions. (Note: Be sure that you include space at the bottom of the form for attendees to schedule their OWN tour date and time. Statistically, 10%-15% of attendees with acute needs will let you know when they are free to tour your community.
    - ii. Provides you critical feedback on the quality of your content and presenters. Evaluation forms should always include questions about the quality of the venue, food, and room temperature. Equally, your form should include questions about the quality of the presenter, topics covered and if there were topics that were missing or needed further expansion. To ignore responses to these questions will undermine your ability to consistently improve the ROI from your community events.
    - iii. Provides powerful information for your database. Immediately, upon returning to your office, you should add all the information from the evaluation form into your CRM. This information will help you prioritize your follow-up activities.
3. **Create highly targeted messaging.** Use the information from your evaluation forms to help you:
  - a. Craft follow-up messages to the attendees who didn’t book a tour. Look, some attendees aren’t ready to book at tour at the end of your event. However, you can use the information from their survey to craft follow-up calls and emails to address/answer their questions and to ask them to book a tour.
  - b. Create more meaningful, targeted messaging in all your marketing efforts, from direct mail to digital campaigns.
4. **Become their ongoing resource for information.** This is especially important for your long-term leads. Think less like an acute care provider and more like AARP.

Each of the above “imperatives” needs to be executed consistently with razor precision in order to get the tour, Bob tells me.

“The days of just marketing your community are gone,” Bob says. “You must market to win the hearts and minds of prospective residents and their families. It’s how you get the tour, how you get the move-in and how you build a community of happy residents.”



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