



Do These Numbers Scare You as Much as They Do Me?

By Susan Saldibar

Did you know this?

- 40-60% of initial inquiries are missed
- 80% of them won't leave a message
- 55% of them will never inquire again

Those are unsettling numbers . . . especially when you hear them from someone who knows her way around senior living, like Anne Kempzell, Account Executive for RealPage. ([RealPage](#) is a Senior Housing Forum partner.)

What does a veteran senior living marketer know about marketing your community? Turns out, a lot.

I had heard that Anne once worked in a few senior living companies. So, when I spoke with her recently I asked about that first. She worked initially as a community relations director for Sunrise Senior Living and then as the Vice President of Sales and Marketing, where her first task was to set up a marketing department from scratch. And, by the way, much of that was before we had the internet and a lot of other technologies to make things easier.

So, here was my question for Anne, veteran sales and marketing guru. Amidst all the seemingly limitless automation, digital marketing platforms, and other technologies out there, what's important "right now" for senior living community operators to have in place in order to dodge those three alarming statistics above?

Anne didn't hesitate to recommend three areas you should be focusing on:

1. **Your Website.** No surprises here, and yet Anne continues to be amazed at how many senior living communities still have websites that look like they have hardly been touched in 5 years. "Today you need to make sure that visitors can quickly get information and answers to questions," says Anne. That means you need modern features, such as "click to chat" and 3-D renderings of rooms, including virtual

tours. “It’s expected,” says Anne. “If you don’t have the right information in the right place immediately accessible, they will simply abandon your site and move on,” she says.

2. **Your Lead Response System.** Anne doesn’t mince words here. If you want to capture all your incoming inquiries, you need to use a contact center. And this isn’t a commercial for RealPage, (who operates one of the leading contact centers in the country). This goes back years for Anne. Back to when she personally witnessed leads falling through the cracks. “Incoming leads would go into voicemail, often because the sales reps were busy on another call or conducting a tour,” she says. That’s when she lobbied hard to hire a contact center. “It wasn’t easy to sell management on the idea,” she tells me. “But I could see the benefit and it really worked out well in the end,” she adds. By the way, for those who think their own team should personally handle every call that comes into the community, about 20% of your calls will come in after hours. (And, if you believe the statistics above, you’ll lose those leads.)
3. **Your Customer Relationship Management system.** You need to have a good CRM. But “good” according to Anne, doesn’t mean you need to load it down with lots of added features you may not need. “What you need with your CRM is to make sure everything that can be connected to it, is connected to it,” Anne says. “You don’t want to have your valuable sales team spending all their time double entering data.” So your CRM should produce reports that leadership needs to keep track. You can only do that by connecting with those leads that come in with SEO, which are then automatically qualified and managed.

Here’s why everyone should take Anne’s advice seriously.

I don’t know about you, but I always take people more seriously when they’ve “been in my shoes”. Anne speaks from experience. “When I was a VP we were starting from scratch; a whole new company. We needed to be productive, but not break the bank in the process. So we looked at several options, some with hefty price tags. I’d get a presentation and quote and say, ‘Wow! We can’t afford this!’” That’s why Anne recommends that you layer on extras as you go. “I understand, first hand, the need for high value within a tight budget,” she says. “So, if you focus on those three areas and don’t get distracted by shiny new objects that look exciting but don’t add any bottom line benefit, you’ll be able to capture more leads and stay within budget.”



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