



Do You Terrify Your Competitors?

By Pam McDonald

Last month Senior Housing Forum Publisher Steve Moran asked his Facebook Senior Living Leadership group this question: what scares your competition about your community? In other words, what is your competitive edge? The cricket chirping was resounding.

No doubt, a few leaders worry about giving away company secrets. But a problem with playing your cards so close to your vest is that while you're giving nothing away to the competition, your prospects – the people you want to reach – probably won't know what's special about you either.

What Is Your Community's Secret Sauce?

So, the questions become what makes your community special? What makes seniors and their families want to check you out . . . take a tour . . . and eventually, move in? Do you have a process for identifying and developing effective differentiators? Do you have a way to manage and measure outcomes of your competitive messaging? Do you have quality proof that can be turned into competitive messaging?

J. Mark Hamilton, Vice President of Enterprise Solutions for [MatrixCare®](#), a modular electronic health records (EHR), marketing, and operations management platform, points out that using unique, innovative technology, like MatrixCare®, gives communities a powerful marketing differentiator – since senior living continues to be a slow adoption of technological tools.

What Makes MatrixCare® Special?

MatrixCare®, a Senior Housing Forum partner, enables senior living and other long-term care providers to focus on documenting and communicating internally with appropriate family members and those who care for loved ones delivering superior resident care. This enhances outcomes that achieve maximum administrative efficiencies and operating margins.

This modular, yet fully integrated, multi-function software is the system of choice for over 13,000 U.S. facility-based care settings – including senior living, skilled nursing, and home health providers. And, it incorporates a differentiator of its own. Healthcare data coming into MatrixCare® is deconstructed into small, discrete bits of information and then reconstructed in a variety of at-a-glance templates.

This improvement eliminates redundant data entry as well as the need to copy, fax, email, and manage multiple pieces of paper. (You can refresh your memory about the system's many other innovations and benefits by perusing the article, "Bet You Cannot Count All the Benefits," [here](#).)

Building Your Community's Differentiators

Discovering your community's specialness starts with a deep understanding of what business differentiators are. Here's a good working definition of a true differentiator:

It is a unique characteristic, feature, aspect and/or benefit enjoyed by your community (or company). But, it also must be highly valued by your prospects and inspire them to perceive your community as better than your key competitors. In other words, the key is to identify and leverage what is unique to your community that enables you to stand out in a segment of the marketplace where senior living looks substantially the same.

Mark points out that differentiators also must:

- be true and objectively provable with metrics or demonstrable (to be believed and trusted);
- engage the geographic health and wellness community in ways that really matter to potential residents, their families, and others who influence move-in decision
- be communicated effectively with emotional power to customers, prospects, referral sources, and other stakeholders

Your Community's Differentiators

It never hurts to re-evaluate your own community's differentiators. Here's a quick approach.

- Make a list of all the things your community does or could do better than your competitors
- Eliminate the following:
 - Features that are not unique (including such things as socialization, outings, health-related care, especially if these are state requirements for assisted living)
 - Things that you can't demonstrate; i.e., compassionate staff, friendly residents, exceptional meals
 - Features you have not verified with market research as important to seniors, like craft rooms, barbeque pits, etc.
- Finally, write a sentence or two "point of difference" statement that makes your unique characteristic clear, tells why it matters, and provides your target audience with a reason they should believe your claim. Here's an example from MatrixCare®:

**Awarded 2018 best in KLAS for long-term care software –
for the second consecutive year.**



This article has been brought to you by [MatrixCare®](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).