



# Stop Losing Your Hot (and Cold) Leads!

By Michelle Seitzer

Yesterday, I emailed a company contact I hadn't been in touch with for several months. Seconds after sending, my cell phone rang. It was a company representative, letting me know my liaison was no longer there — and what was I inquiring about so he could put me in touch with the new person? Seconds after we hung up, he had connected me by email with a new account manager.

Creepy, but efficient. And I have to admit: I was impressed. I had considered breaking my relationship with the company, but this speedy response made me reconsider.

Guess what? If you want to increase your occupancy rates, that's the breakneck pace you must maintain to convert your online leads. "One business day" may be a sufficient turnaround for other deliverables, but when it comes to converting online leads, you're the tortoise.

The hare calls within 60 seconds of receiving an online inquiry. The hare's reward? A 394% conversion rate, vs. the tortoise's — aka, calling in 24 hours — 17%.

Yes, you read that right: 394%. This image from a recent [Caring.com](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) webinar tells the story:

## How to Improve Your "Speed to Lead" Rate

Reality check: this 100-miles-an-hour speed is not always going to be possible, nor does it mean you'll always lose the lead if you call two minutes or even two days later. If you're responding within a minute, a day, or a week, you're actually in pretty good shape — because some senior living communities don't follow-up at all, as this [senior marketing firm](#) suggests. In fact, this [Senior Housing News article](#) reports that some communities don't even answer inbound calls at all!



But there are a number of practical things you can do to [increase your response time](#) and conversion rates, as this article from Caring.com recommends:

1. Set goals — and talk about them. It's one thing to decide in the C-Suite that you want that 394% conversion rate for your community, but you have to communicate that goal to your staff. Not just the sales team, because sometimes, sales happen at the front desk with a walk-in. Make sure your staff understands the importance of response time, be it an online inquiry, social media post comment, or returning a phone call about pricing.
2. Check in with the sales team. Keep your eye on the numbers, and you'll show the sales team you're fully committed to meeting your community's conversion goals.
3. Measure often. Metrics matter, so make a habit of regularly [reviewing your ROI](#) for these important digital leads.

- Prioritize. Do you use a CRM, like Caring's [Partner Portal](#), to manage leads? Use it to your advantage as you work with your staff on prioritizing their responses to hot and cold leads.
- Expand the team. So you can't hire more staff to return inquiry calls 24-7? Consider partnering with a call center to fill in the gaps.

### **Don't Be a Pest... Do Be Persistent**

Slow and steady doesn't typically win in this kind of race, but a steady pace of persistence and prospect-nurturing must follow your fast response.

Because it's not enough to call back within seconds. And before you call, read the online inquiry carefully. Learn as much as you can about the person before dialing the number.

Maybe you have to call a few times before you actually connect. Don't give up. It doesn't always mean they're not interested.

When you do connect, take time to get to know the prospective resident and their partner in decision-making — be it an adult child, spouse, or other relative/friend. Ask how they prefer to communicate (email vs. phone) and tailor your follow-ups accordingly. Go the extra mile so you're top of mind when it's decision-time, as this graphic illustrates:

### **When It's Time to Tour**

So your team has returned an inquiry call in less than 60 seconds. They've personalized their follow-ups. They're interested. Now, to clinch that conversion, get them through the door for a tour. And make it a good one, because online reviews after the fact can come back to haunt you — or help more people find out about how great you are!

These highlights from [a 2015 Caring.com survey](#) reinforces just how critical a good tour is for turning "prospect" into "resident:"

- People who tour are seriously searching: 1/3 of respondents toured four or more communities, and only 17% visited just one.
- 68% of people who toured a senior community reported being "surprised at how nice it was."
- Almost all tour takers (91%) commented on their favorable impression of the staff, and 10% specifically mentioned observing staff interaction as an important reason to visit in person.
- Almost half the people who had taken at least one tour had either already moved in (40%) or were scheduled to do so (8%).

Sure, tours are great because you get to show, not just tell, how fabulous your community is. But scheduling and conducting tours takes time — and that's time away from the desk for sales staff who need to be returning those online inquiries and calls!

Here's a perk if you're a Caring.com senior living community partner: you get some support on the tour-booking side. In fact, Caring.com family advisors are specially trained to focus on booking tours, because Caring.com knows how helpful tours are to families researching senior living communities. Once Caring.com has booked the tour, they follow up with tour reminders — though they still recommend one of your own staff also makes contact to directly re-confirm the tour day/time.

Call quickly, follow up thoughtfully, and tour intentionally: that's how you go from names on a webform to names on your resident roster.

Want to learn more about the people who are searching for communities like yours? Check out [Caring.com's upcoming webinar](#) on May 10th. Research and content leaders will share data and marketing insights from Caring.com's latest Caregiver Journey survey, which measures a wide range of information about family caregivers of older adults in the US. [Register here.](#)



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