



## Why Are CCRCs Helping Assisted Living with Lead Generation?

*By Susan Saldibar*

Believe it or not, CCRCs have discovered something about lead generation that Assisted Living communities can take advantage of. And it's all about leads. The one thing everyone has in common!

When I last spoke with Bob Wilgus, Director of Marketing and Strategic Digital Communications for [LeadingResponse](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner), he told me about the amazing, and often unexpected, results CCRCs are having from their off-site events in local restaurants. They are receiving an average of 1-2 deposit checks at the events themselves. And this is without even taking a tour!. And, anyone who knows anything about CCRCs knows that theirs is a longer sales cycle than that of Assisted Living. They certainly don't go into these events with an expectation of getting a deposit check, so it pretty much blows their mind when they do.

### **Why would anyone write a deposit check? They haven't even visited the community yet!**

I asked Bob why CCRCs are getting so much traction at these events. There are a couple reasons. And Bob tells me more and more Assisted Living operators are listening and learning from them.

**They have finally learned to listen to the consumer.** CCRCs are moving away from the old concept of selling real estate and pivoting into a discussion revolving around providing a continuity of life style. The community is presented as people, lifestyle and security. Not as real estate. Not as rooms and hallways. They have also learned that their ideal prospects do not want to go straight into a tour. They need a step in between initial interest and visiting the community. The off-site dinner events provide that step. "Yes, the target demographic for a CCRC is different from Assisted Living and the value proposition may be different, but they both really

want the same thing,” says Bob. “They want to get people through their doors. And the way to get them to do that is to talk with them in a relaxed environment on neutral territory first.” Before closing the discussion on demographic targeting, Bob continued, “We can target your ideal new resident, whether you’re an Independent Living, Assisted Living or Memory Care community. Our ability to target isn’t exclusive to CCRC’s.

**They don’t expect to get a deposit. That’s why they often do.** Because, they are not pushing to get the tour, they can take their time connecting with the prospects at their offsite events. They talk about lifestyle, about people and what it would be like to live in their communities. They talk openly about pricing, rather than avoiding it. “What happens? Everyone relaxes, including the presenters,” says Bob. The sense of urgency is gone. “People gravitate towards a senior living community that is not trying to ‘hard sell’ them. What is the result? It makes them feel really good about the community and more comfortable in scheduling a tour. And, as the CCRCs are finding, it can even lead to a deposit or two, much quicker than anticipated.”

It also helps that the database and process LeadingResponse uses to secure attendees results in a higher concentration of qualified participants who are financially able to make a “buying” decision. So, presenters know that, assuming they do a good job, the likelihood of getting a good number of tours is high. As Valerie Whitman, VP of Senior Living for LeadingResponse, recently reported, they are filling the events to capacity and pulling in an average of 108 leads. “There is a hunger and a need for that educational component. So, it’s been very powerful,” she says.

### **How the consumer thinks, feels and makes decisions has changed. So must Assisted Living communities.**

I asked Bob how he gets Assisted Living community operators to pay attention to what another segment of the marketplace is doing and why they should take it seriously. “This is an industry undergoing dramatic change in terms of the marketing/sales model. How the consumer thinks, feels and makes decisions has to be respected,” he tells me. “CCRCs and Assisted Living communities need leads. But both remain stuck, relying on outdated marketing models. For Assisted Living communities that means sitting among hundreds of competitors on A Place For Mom or putting out the cookies and mimosas and waiting for people to come through your doors. But today’s prospective residents want to approach you their way. Only those community operators who listen and adjust will reap the benefits. And there’s plenty to go around.”



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