



## **This Will Boost Your Occupancy Numbers In Less Than 45 Days**

*By Susan Saldibar*

If you went to Argentum, did you happen to catch Valerie Whitman's session?

I couldn't make the conference, but I knew that Valerie (VP of Senior Living for LeadingResponse) was conducting a session on increasing occupancy. I caught up with her recently as I was curious as to the reaction to her session, especially given its title: "The 5 Most Important Resident Marketing Trends And How They Can Boost Your Occupancy In Less Than 45 Days!"

Valerie's first observation was to note how relatively little data was being used by communities to qualify prospective residents. As an example, she was surprised that, out of all the people in the room (and it was full), only one person knew what "ailment data" was and what to do with it.

Does that surprise you? Given all the new communities springing up, it would seem to me that the more you know about your prospects the better, right?

### **What's a room full of financially qualified prospects worth?**

[LeadingResponse](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) is a big believer in data. They collect lots of it and they use it on behalf of their clients to pull in targeted prospects to off-site educational events. The idea is that if you can carve out an attentive audience of super-qualified prospects (using a bigger, deeper data set to qualify), you can beat the odds and convert more residents. That's an over-simplification but, with that in mind, here are the 5 key areas Valerie covered in the session.

- Attracting financially pre-qualified prospects (using a deeper set of data to eliminate those financially unable to afford your community)
- Community event preferences (what format will attract them, and where)
- Booking more tours (how to open them up to the tour)
- The one topic they want to discuss (see below)
- You're speaking to highly educated people (how they are different and why you need to change your sales tactics)

Valerie provides so much detail in each of these areas that you might want to watch the recorded session, which you can download [here](#).

## **This is a well educated, savvy consumer. They know what they want. Do you?**

What Valerie did find encouraging in the session is that the attendees expressed a lot of interest in better understanding consumer behavior and how they can use it to their advantage. They are beginning to understand that they can use data to better qualify prospects, especially financially. And, in the process, what emerges is a prospect who has changed dramatically over the last few years. "This is a savvier, more informed, educated consumer," Valerie says. And they know what they want. As for the topic they want to discuss? "Cost. Don't shy away from it. You need to be up front. They'll do the math," she says.

Communities are also starting to understand that today's prospects are far less likely to walk through their doors to get the information they need. They'd rather sit with peers in a local restaurant where they can relax. "In the off-site environment, we see barriers go down instead of up," says Valerie. "It's easier for sales to start building a relationship because their audience is more receptive," she adds.

It's all part of a dynamic sales formula that has evolved out of the ability to mine a deeper and more accurate set of prospect data and use it to create a sales atmosphere that converts. But, according to Valerie, it's a formula that continues to elude many communities who remain fixed within their comfort zones. "That's why they continue to get lackluster results," says Valerie. "The combination of identifying fully qualified prospects and meeting them on their own turf is what's making the difference."

That old quote "knowledge is power," comes to mind. So, assuming you have the ability to mine the data coming in and use it to make sure that at least 90% of your off-site attendees are highly qualified, what could your sales team do with that?

Valerie can certainly tell you what not to do. Don't keep plugging it into your old ways.

If you weren't at Argentum, you're in luck. You can watch a reply of the full Argentum session from LeadingResponse [here](#).



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