



You're Not 100% Occupied, Yet Leads Go Unanswered . . . Hmmm

By Valissa Smith

I'm no spring chicken. I've been around the block a few times, and I've been hitting my head against the wall for too long about our census. As grandma used to say, "sometimes you have to sit in the muck, to regain control of your life." After pointing the finger at internal issues like low staff, high turnover, no budget for too long it was time to admit my mistakes – the biggest one was the insanity of repeating what wasn't working.

I started asking myself some serious questions.

1. **Does every single lead get answered?** I do the best I can, but the truth is, at least 50% of them never get fully answered – ever. Ouch!
2. **When I do answer leads, how long does it take?** Well . . . again, I fit it in when I can, but the truth is, usually an attempt is made about the 24-48- hour mark and it can take 5-6 attempts to finally re-connect with the person so I frequently give up.
3. **When I do connect with a lead, are they qualified to move in?** The unfortunate, and very frustrating answer is greater than 90% of leads I get are not a good fit for my community, which is probably why I don't waste a lot of time chasing leads anyway.

Clearly, I have a lead management problem. On top of not filling beds, I wonder how much marketing money I'm wasting, throwing good money after bad. So, I did something I hate

doing . . . I asked others how they solved the problem. That's when I was introduced to Kristy Watson, [SeniorVu's](#) VP of Client Services, and learned her [Three Cardinal Rules of Lead Management](#). (SoftVu/SeniorVu is a Senior Housing Forum partner.)

1. **100% of your leads MUST be answered.** A lead should never hit the ground.
2. **100% of your leads MUST get a human response within 5 minutes.** If the response is later than 5 minutes, they are 3 times more likely NOT to move-in.
3. **100% of the leads that your community sales team handles should be qualified.** Someone has to help screen the calls.

She told me that following these 3 rules will, on average, yield [about 14 more move-ins a year](#) for the typical community without spending ANY more marketing dollars. Imagine, 14 move-ins that would have likely just gone away as un-returned inquiries. If I was ever going to turn around our occupancy problem I would have to take control and bring in reinforcements. Shockingly, this is possible for a fraction of the cost of hiring even one full-time person.

Everyone makes mistakes. It's when we repeat the same ones and expect different results that get us in trouble. Once I let Kristy and her team pull us out of the muck, I regained control of my time and improved our occupancy problem.



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