



Can You Really Do That with A Lead?

By Susan Saldibar

The lines between sales and marketing are blurring. And that's a good thing. It's also a message that Kristin Hambleton, VP of Business Development for [Continuum CRM](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner), continues to drive home to senior living communities. The abundance of data we now have access to has created an environment that enables marketing and sales to share more information than ever before. So marketing can be just as connected as sales is to each interaction throughout a prospect's journey.

"Marketing is more 'sales' now than ever before. No longer is it just about nice ads and other imagery," Kristin told me in a recent conversation. "Now it's all about converting and nurturing qualified leads through the sales cycle."

Ask your sales and marketing folks if they are tracking these metrics.

Kristin spoke with me about the very different sales/marketing climate today as opposed to even 5 years ago. So much has changed. And what senior living community leadership does to leverage those changes to their advantage could make the difference to who thrives and who doesn't.

(I want to stop and mention here that Continuum recently released a really informative guide called "CRM for the Marketing Team". If you want to cut to the chase, you can [download](#) the guide to get all the details.)

During our conversation, Kristin gave me a sampling of some of the kinds of metrics that all senior living community marketers should now be looking at routinely. Here are just a few:

- Length of time from inquiry to first interaction
- Rate of re-inquiry
- Percentage of content re-engagement
- Length of time spent in each stage/step of life cycle (from inquiry to move-in)
- Email metrics: opens, click-throughs, unsubscribes, bounces, spam, complaints
- Conversion percentages
- ROMI (Return on marketing investment), which is measuring the effectiveness of each touch point (events, d/m, ads, email blasts, etc.)

Can you use data insights to change the course of a lead before it goes to a competitor?

So, while it's still all about how many leads convert into move-ins, a good CRM can produce and track so many metrics between initial inquiry and move-in that senior living community marketers can potentially change the course of a lead and bring it your way instead of your competitor's way. As a marketer, I find that pretty amazing.

"Back when I started in senior living, it was just 'how many leads' generated," says Kristin. "So, as long as you got more leads from one year to next, your marketers were basically doing their job. Because they were only focusing on that one number."

And that one number, in and of itself, has little meaning. During our conversation, Kristin made several really good points about marketing metrics that bear noting:

- You can now create metrics that cover the entire sales cycle, from inquiry to move-in (Continuum has the capability to provide this).
- Relying upon Google Analytics alone will leave you in the dark compared to communities using their CRM capabilities more effectively.
- You can now look at campaign results based on re-inquiries after a campaign has been launched (e.g., % response to specific d/m pieces). That means, not only the click-throughs from your email campaign but things like the length of time a prospect takes in each step. (Again, this is a capability of Continuum that may not be available in other CRMs.)
- Since your metrics can be tied together, you can know, quantifiably, where you might need to beef up more frequent marketing messages, where people get stuck, and which messages to deliver when that happens.
- Perhaps most importantly, you can use your CRM to eliminate silos! Our platform structure facilitates collaboration between sales and marketing within an inclusive data environment. Everyone can see the same information.

It's important to note that the metrics and data insights Kristin shared with me reflect the capabilities of the Continuum CRM product. You will need to assess your own CRM in terms of its ability to collect and organize data. But, regardless, the future implications of this level of data sophistication can't be ignored. At least not for long.

"We can now get so many great metrics from new CRMs," Kristin tells me. "Use them to your advantage. Your competitors are probably already doing so!"

Again, if you haven't yet read Continuum's "CRM for the Marketing Team" guide, you really should. You can download it [here](#).

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