

TAKEOVER

Want a Better 2019? Stage a “Takeover”!

By Susan Saldibar

Last July, Sage Age Strategies did something that I happen to think is really cool (and gutsy). They allowed their employees to “take over” all their social media channels. For 4 months!

Now for operators of senior living communities that probably sounds a little scary, given all the privacy concerns and regulations. But this is an industry crying out for authenticity and fresh voices. And it’s in that spirit that [Sage Age Strategies](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) decided to experiment by unleashing the diverse voices of staff members within its own organization. And it made an impact; a positive one, according to all who were involved.

I caught up with Debra Gawet, Social and Digital Content Strategist for Sage Age, and Madison Graham, Social Media Specialist for Sage Age, and asked them to explain how these social media takeovers work.

In a nutshell, the social media takeover is a program that enables employees or clients to “take over” your social media channels in an organized manner for specific periods of time. The goal is to help your organization reach new audiences, increase engagement, build up the authenticity of your brand, and even drive more traffic to your website. “Of course, you need to select employees or customers you trust,” Debra tells me. “It’s important that they be reliable, invested in your brand, and that they can communicate well.”

The Sage Age social media takeover (yes, it even has its own hashtag, #SageAgeTakeover), running from July through October, allowed various team members to take turns handling the Sage Age Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn posts for one week, each. And, as you may have guessed, they rocked it, sharing photos, videos, and stories about day to day life working at Sage Age.

Here are a few of the results Debra and Madison shared with me:

- A substantial increase in all engagement metrics being analyzed.
- More posts per day, which meant a higher level of engagement.
- Videos, GIFs, and Boomerang uploads outperformed traditional, single image uploads.
- An increase in engagement from other team members, as they visited the social media channels to support the team members participating in the takeover.

So, it appears that these takeovers really work! In fact, Debra and Madison tell me that they were so impressed with the results that they are now recommending social media takeover programs for many of their client-partners in the senior living space. It's not something you jump into without planning, however. "Establish your goals, specify your implementation plans, and identify the baseline engagement metrics that you will use to gauge and compare end results," Debra advises. "If you don't, you won't be able to assess its business value to your community and effectively plan for future 'takeover' possibilities."

What's great about these programs, according to Sage Age, is that they're breathing new life into social channels for senior living communities, giving their brands a personality. "It's about humanizing your voice," Debra says. "People want to hear other people's stories. They want to see that personality shine through."

Debra and Madison stress that this needs to be done with supervision to ensure resident and staff privacy and meet stringent industry requirements. So you'll want to put in some safeguards to make sure it runs smoothly and is supervised accordingly. That's just one of the areas where the folks at Sage Age can be of help, by the way. They work closely with their clients to carve out meaningful social media programs that bring greater authenticity and warmth to their brands. And, as I think you'd agree, never has that been more important than now.

You can get all the details of the social media takeover and more of the results in the Sage Age [blog](#), which includes tips for starting your own program.



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