



Your Prospective Residents Take it Seriously: Do You?

By Susan Saldibar

Do you check out reviews before you buy online? I know I do. It's interesting how much we, as consumers, rely upon the opinions of total strangers, isn't it? And, according to a new G5 [ebook](#) (G5 is a Senior Housing Forum partner), we are doing so in increasing numbers. The section on Reputation Management states that 90% of consumers say that online reviews impact their purchase decision. And that's not all. 84% of consumers trust reviews when making a purchase decision just as much as recommendations from friends or family. Amazing. But that's the world we live in.

The Do's and Don'ts of Review Programs

It's hard to argue the fact that reviews wield a lot of power these days. So how senior living communities manage reviews has never been more important. No one knows that better than G5. And they've provided some useful "dos and don'ts" in the ebook. Here are a few of them to check against your own review programs:

- **Do** seek authentic positive reviews. The best way to do that is to be great at what you do. It's that simple. Provide top quality care and, when you get a positive reaction, encourage your residents and family members to give you a review.

- **Don't** solicit reviews en masse. Sending bulk emails out asking for good reviews tells search engines like Google that you're "gaming" the system. It can have a negative impact and Yelp and Google may even penalize you for doing it.
- **Do** include a review form on your own website. That makes it easy for residents and family members to review your community. It also helps strengthen your position in SEO.
- **Don't** review your own community. It is a conflict of interest and may get you penalized by the search engines. It can also lead to distrust among your staff and residents.
- **Do** reply to reviews as soon as possible! This is especially true when a negative review has been posted. After you resolve the issue, you can ask the individual who posted the review to post an update on how their issue was resolved. It demonstrates total transparency, which reflects positively on your community.
- **Don't** incentivize your residents and staff to post positive reviews. It is dishonest and can result in penalties. On top of that, it creates an unhealthy work environment that can be hard to turn around.
- **Do** have regular meetings to discuss your reviews. You may discover trends that can be shared and acted upon. Issues should be discussed and kudos given for good reviews. Meeting regularly also sends a message to your staff that you take reviews seriously.

Without question, reviews now play a major role in reputation management. Your future residents and families are paying attention to them in rapidly increasing numbers. You can't push them aside any longer.

G5 recommends that communities begin by taking inventory of reviews that are already out there and quickly begin managing them. Then start working to organically build a culture that encourages residents, staff, and families to share their experiences by posting reviews. If you're doing a good job, you'll be rewarded with a steady stream of reviews that help tell your story in an authentic and meaningful way.

There are more "dos and don'ts," which you can read in G5's "20 Digital Touchpoints" ebook. You can download it [here](#).



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