



This System Will Make Your Sales People Better and Increase Move-In's

By Susan Saldibar

There is a new sales program being rolled out by Sage Age Strategies that senior living leadership should know about. It's called GROW. And it appears to be as much a roadmap to a better way of living as it is to a better way of selling. GROW seems so right-on for today's senior living community culture that I'm surprised it didn't come along sooner. Maybe now is just the time.

Deborah Potter, VP of Consulting for [Sage Age](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) let me have a sneak peek at the new GROW workbook. She's careful to note that GROW is not about changing any of the operational mechanics of sales. But, a quick read through tells me that, if successful, this approach may revolutionize the way we approach sales. Strong words, I know, but it feels so right, not only to meet the challenges senior living communities face today, but to attract a new generation of gen-Y and gen-Z talent. (After all, these kids are already wired to think this way.)

Descend-stand-ascent together. Sales revisited. Big time.

Deborah drew my attention to a key reference made early in the workbook, namely as it serves as a foundation to many of the concepts described throughout the text. The reference is to Brene Brown's Empathy vs. Sympathy video, which describes the "dark hole" people find themselves in during a tough transition (such as moving into a senior living community). "True empathy means climbing down into that hole with them and ultimately climbing out together," Deborah tells me. "And it's that kind of empathy GROW aims to build within the senior living sales process."

GROW involves 5 stages of what Sage Age refers to as the descend-stand-ascend together (the hole) pattern that re-defines the relationship between the sales counselor and the prospective resident, based on what they need from you. Here they are:

1. **Connection** or initial rapport and discovery of their overall situation.
2. **Attentiveness** which requires deeper listening and careful insight.
3. **Empathy** which uses insight to ask deeper questions designed to lead to their self-discovery as well as your discovery of their needs.
4. **Advice** that is based on the deep listening and caring from the previous stages and therefore is accurate and meets the prospective resident's true need.
5. **Support** to implement and carry out the decisions that have now made.

For each of these stages, the program digs deep (and I mean deep!) to help initiate and sustain an authentic engagement between sales and prospective residents. In the process of doing so it unravels and discards hackneyed old notions about selling, reframing the sales-prospect relationship to one that creates as perfect of an emotional alignment as possible between sales and prospective resident. It even has a glossary-style "Index of Ideas" at the back of the workbook to reinforce the concepts introduced throughout in the text.

GROW is a program that cries out for the attention (and support) of leadership.

Scrolling through the GROW workbook, I found myself at the Advice stage (the "close" in traditional sales terms). I like this wording: "The Advising stage is also the stage at which the commitment is made. It's the stage in which you ask for the sale, though if you've done the previous 3 stages correctly, it won't feel like an ask at all. It will feel like an organic conclusion to all the work you've done together thus far." If I'm sales, I'm loving that.

As exciting as the GROW program is, I can't help but think it needs the support of leadership to be successful. How many dynamic ideas get stifled by a leadership team that is not willing or able to embrace change? I may be overstepping here, but I'd say that before you incorporate GROW, it's a good move to make sure your entire team, top-down, is committed to revisiting, not only the sales process, but your culture as a community. Deborah agrees and believes that GROW may, in fact, be able to help build that culture, for those open to giving it the chance.

Sage Age has packaged GROW to meet all shapes and sizes of communities. Of course, they offer on-site training, but they also provide two virtual options: customized virtual training for single communities and virtual "classroom" sessions for multiple communities. They will also conduct intensive long-term or short-term sales consulting.

Sage Age is holding its GROW Sales Summit June 19th-20th in Pensacola, Florida. You can find out more about it and [register here](#).



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