10 Things That Alienate Your Prospects:

What to Do Instead

LeadingResponse

When you have worked for years inside senior living, it is easy to forget that your prospects and their families have not. For them, senior living is still a relative “un-known.” That means you need to market and communicate to them in a style that shows sensitivity and compassion. That’s not always easy.

Through years of speaking to residents and families, we’ve learned a lot about the kinds of sales approaches that can really turn off prospective residents. Here is our list of Top 10 “don’ts,” along with some suggested adjustments.

1

Don’t assume you know how they feel. You don’t.

Avoid assumptive statements like: “You feel lost” or “You’re overwhelmed” or “You don’t know where to go.”

Instead, soften your messaging with “you may be feeling, or perhaps you are worrying.” This goes for personal conversations as well as digital marketing and social media messaging. Everyone’s experience is unique. Your communication needs to acknowledge and respect that.

2

Don’t speak over or ignore the prospective resident.

That means avoid “Does he like to...” or “Is she able to...” if the prospective resident is also on the call with a relative or sitting in front of you.

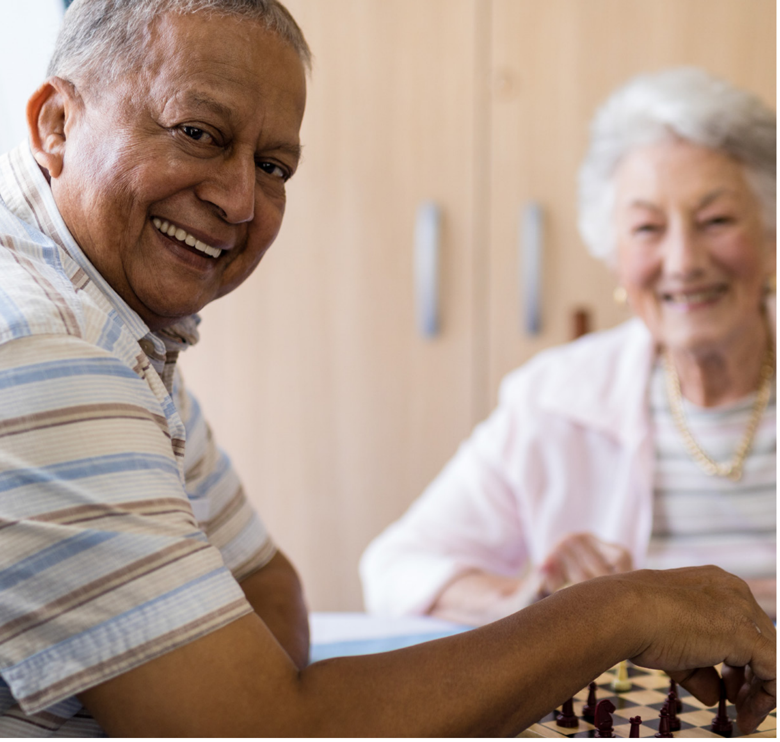
Always start with the assumption that, even if a relative is present, the prospective resident can think for him/herself. Include them in the conversation as much as possible. Even if they ultimately turn control over to their adult son or daughter, it demonstrates respect for your prospective resident.

3

Avoid using potentially ageist terms to refer to prospective residents.

Your audience wants to work with a local advisor. Make it clear where your business is based at the beginning of the webinar to avoid any confusion and unnecessary inquiries about your location.

Build a relationship with your audience – they are part of your community! Tell them where you live and where your office is located. Share community activities you may be involved in or places you volunteer at. Why do you and your family love living here? Where do you spend your weekends biking, eating out, or hanging with friends? Make your experience personal and connect to your audience on a casual level.



Avoid using acronyms like ADLs, LPNs, CRDs, etc. when describing your community.

They are "facility-speak" and are both confusing and impersonal.

Instead, take the extra two seconds to use full names with language your prospects will understand. Even referring to "activities of daily living" can be confusing to someone who may not know what they involve. Describe them as "the daily personal activities, like bathing, brushing teeth, dressing"." This makes a big difference to your audience.

Never, ever use repelling terms like "toileting" when speaking with a prospect.

While they may be convenient shorthand for staff, they are offensive to prospective residents and family members.

Instead, take the extra time to describe this activity properly, "helping your dad in the bathroom." Again, taking those extra few seconds demonstrates respect for your prospect.

Resist amenity dumping.

No matter how tempting it is to brag about your ice cream parlor or gourmet coffee station, hold back from listing out all the amenities. Use your marketing documents to provide the full list.

Instead, look for ways to weave mention of amenities into the conversation, naturally, as each might relate to the prospect. It is a much more effective way to introduce each amenity and will have a greater impact.

Try to avoid cliché phrases on your marketing materials

like "We're here for you," or "Providing premium care," etc. While they may be true, they are used so often that they lose meaning to your audience, especially when accompanied by stock photos.

Instead, dig deeper and look for ways to bring those concepts to life. Spotlight some examples of why your care is better and how your team supports your residents. Show photos and videos of real residents and caregivers to add greater authenticity to your messaging.

Don't hide pricing.

This is an old school tactic that has long outlived its usefulness. We hear all too often, stories of sales counselors withholding pricing until the end of a two-hour presentation, only to learn that their prospects can't afford it. That's a wasted two hours for everyone.

Instead, share pricing organically, as you move through the process of describing your rooms, amenities and overall environment. If your leads have been well qualified in advance, price shouldn't present a big hurdle.

Don't conduct a virtual meeting unprepared

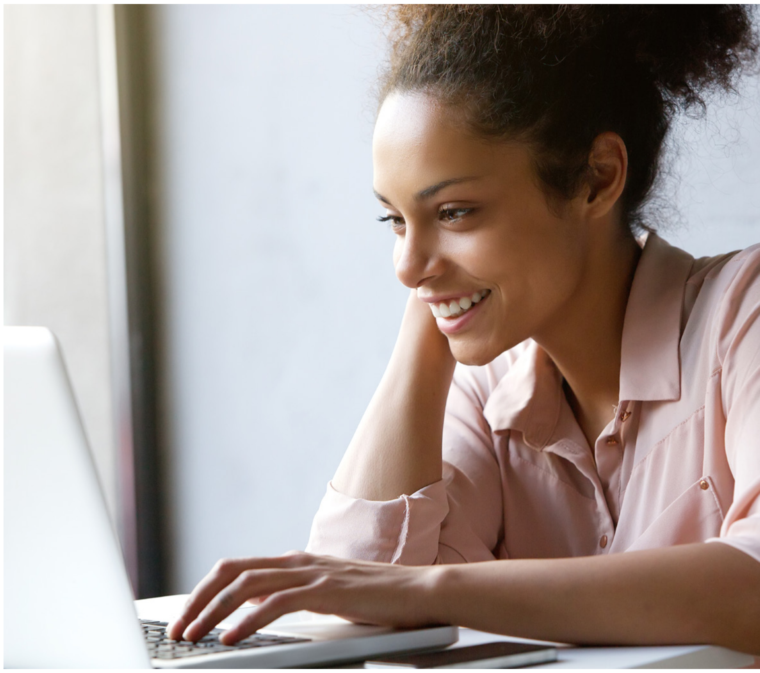
While you may be sitting in an alcove off your kitchen, your appearance and demeanor should be just as professional as if you were meeting a prospect in an office in your building.

Instead, take time in advance to set up your video calls with attention to lighting, background and ambient noise. Dress in a professional way. Be prepared with an agenda, just as you would in an onsite meeting.

Don't send generic email follow ups after a call.

You may have had a great conversation with the adult child of a prospective resident, only to ruin it with a generic "It was nice speaking with you today. Please let me know when you'd like to schedule a follow up call."

Instead, take the extra few minutes to follow up in a way that is personal and in context with your last conversation. Were you speaking with an adult child about her pets or her love of gardening? Mention it in your follow up. It will be time well spent.



How many of these "don'ts" sound familiar to you? The good news is that, by making some adjustments, you will turn those alienating sales habits into a sales experience that will engage the prospect and build trust.

Use this checklist to stay on top of your progress. Let us know how it goes!

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