



RHarper Consulting Update

Put Your Prospect Goggles On!

In the senior housing industry, new construction virtually came to a standstill two years ago and the prospects for new starts in the immediate future are dim. Consequently, the number of communities considering re-positioning is increasing. While new and renovated facilities along with large capital infusions to jump-start marketing are exciting, many communities are missing out on the fundamentals of good facilities management and marketing.

In several recent experiences where the client is looking to spend tens of millions of dollars on renovations and new construction, the initial facility tours have revealed multiple examples of deferred maintenance, poor or confusing signage, and just lack of motivation or urgency on the part of management to address prevailing issues. **PUT YOUR PROSPECT GOGGLES ON!** Look at your community the same way a first time visitor sees and experiences it.

Be honest and objective with yourself and take a tour of your facility as if you were seeing it for the first time. Ask yourself these questions:

- **First Touch**
 - Does your website have clear and concise directions to your location?
 - Does your staff have the proper telephone training and skills to quickly direct prospects or their out-of-town relatives to your community?
- **Drive-up and curb appeal**
 - Can you readily find the main entrance? How does it look? Is it the nicest in the neighborhood?
 - Continue the drive-up and look critically at the landscaping and curb appeal. Is it litter-free? Does it look freshly mowed, trimmed and maintained? Are the curb lines clean?
 - Is the exterior in good repair, or are there fascia and shingles missing or discolored?
 - When was the last time the building was painted, pressure washed, or otherwise had a major freshen-up?
 - Where does the signage tell you to go? Is it accurate and easy to follow?



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- **Prospect Entry** - Is it impossible for a prospect to miss their destination? It's disappointing how many communities have relocated or done away with their welcome or information centers. Now, these important first impressions are left to an overworked receptionist who is fielding resident complaints, accepting packages, answering questions on a blaring walkie-talkie, or otherwise being distracted from providing an authentic, sincere greeting to a prospect immediately upon entering the community.
- **Tour Path and Models** - What do the tour path and models say about your community? While most marketing departments may have nice models, they may be located so far away from the office that the prospect is overwhelmed with the walk or becomes confused. Further, what does the tour show? Is everything clean, repaired, and maintained, or do you have to constantly make excuses for the condition of the facility? Are the models cleaned and inspected daily, or have you had nasty surprises while bringing prospects into a model?

If every team and board member understands the importance of wearing Prospect Goggles, pretty soon they never take them off. While there are great reasons for repositioning your community, there is still a tremendous value in making sure your existing facility, team and operations are the best they can be. Wear your prospect goggles every day!

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RHarper Consulting Group provides development consulting, program management, and owner representation services focused on the senior living and mixed use sectors. In addition, Mr. Harper is also a listed mediator and arbitrator providing dispute resolution services for the construction and real estate industries.

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