



Getting the Reviews You Need for the Results You Want

By Michelle Seitzer

What's the new word-of-mouth referral everyone wants? Online reviews.

If getting more positive online reviews isn't on your sales & marketing department's To Do list, add it now, because:

- 93% of consumers said online reviews had an impact on their purchasing decisions,
- 85% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations, and
- 82% of consumers read reviews before making a decision.

(Sources: [Podium](#), [Shopify](#), and [BrightLocal](#))

Before they pick up the phone, before they fill out the online contact form, before they send an email, the majority of senior living searchers are reading your community's reviews (and by the way, [do you know what those reviews say?](#)).

Shine Like a Caring Star

Established 8 years ago as an industry first (and adding new care & housing categories each year), the value of the [Caring Stars](#) consumer choice award has increased in tandem with the importance of online reviews. In fact, Denise Graab and her team at Caring.com (a Senior Housing Forum Partner), reported in their [July webinar](#) that Caring Stars [award winners](#) average twice the amount of inquiries and move-ins!

Graab suggests communities who want Caring Stars status for 2019 start now, responding to negative reviews and [proactively seeking](#) new, positive ones. Caring.com's [March 2018 webinar](#) offers the inside track on how to accomplish both of those goals, including tips like:

1. Ask for good reviews from good people. Seek out trusted residents, family members, and affiliated professionals like social workers or geriatric care managers who would be willing to submit positive reviews. Here's a sample email "ask" template from Caring.com:

Sample Ask via Email

Hi Barbara,

Thanks again for your compliments on our dinner menu – our chef was thrilled to receive the feedback and is so glad your mom loved his signature dish!

When you have a moment: would you share your positive feedback as an online review? That would be really helpful to other families searching for a community like ours.

You can submit it online here: **INSERT LINK**. Or I can give you one of the review-by-mail forms they offer, if that's easier for you.

Thank you for considering it, and do let us know if there's more we can do to support you and your mom.

Much appreciated, Cindy

Remind

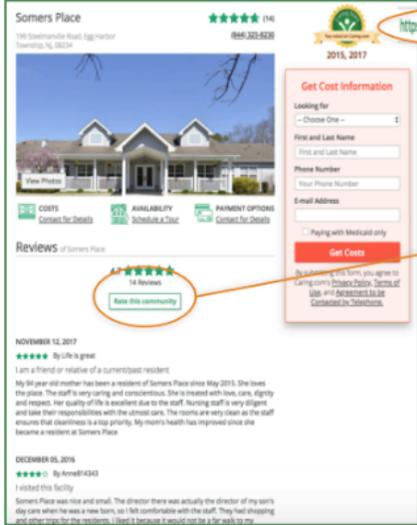
Ask

Match



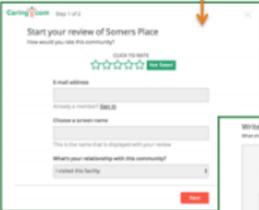
2. Make it easy for people to submit online reviews. Caring.com offers a number of ways to do that, including special features [via the Partner Portal](#).

Fast, Convenient Way to Get Reviews on Caring



<https://www.caring.com/local/assisted-living-facilities-in-egg-harbor-township-new-jersey/somers-place-all/newreview>

Online submissions are processed within 3 business days







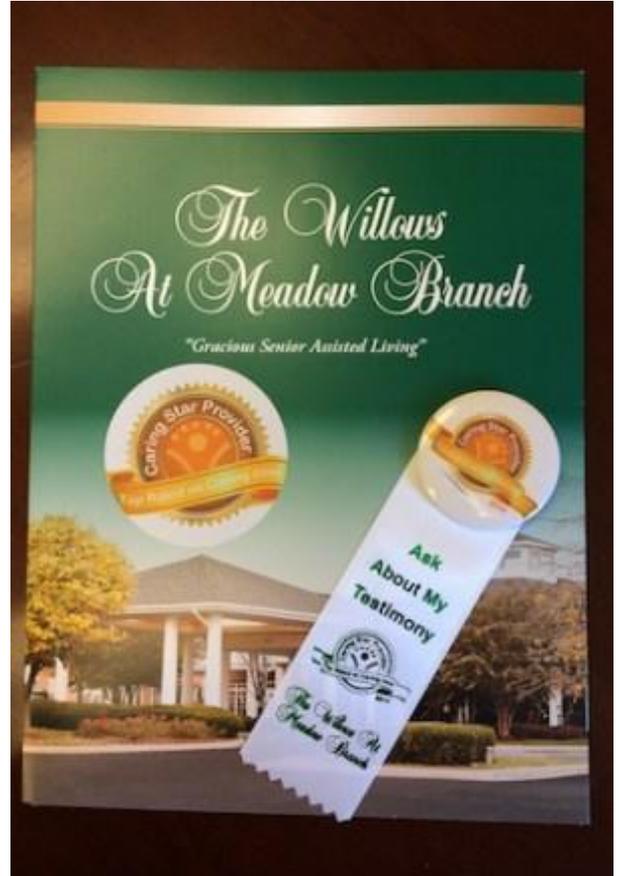
Why Everyone in the Community Should Care About Good Reviews

We all want more tours and prospects, but good reviews can have a domino effect that reaches beyond the sales & marketing team. Graab says good reviews can translate to industry awards, which...

- boosts morale among your staff,
- supports staff retention,
- generates press coverage,
- provides great material for marketing campaigns, and
- reinforces to existing customers and their families your commitment to care.

Willows at Meadow Branch, a multi-year Caring Stars winner in Winchester, VA, leveraged their award by hosting a press conference and award ceremony, having staff wear ribbons and lapel pins for in-house visibility, using the Caring Stars badge on the community's website (linked to the listing with reviews), and displaying outdoor signage notifying the public — both prospects and current residents and families — of their win. They also put the award on their billing statements to gently remind residents and families of their commitment to quality care.

In Pottstown, PA, Right at Home said this of their 2018 home care agency victory: "We know it's a total team effort, and the caregiving team deserves the credit. When we look at the reviews, 80-90% of them name a specific caregiver. That personal connection makes the difference." What a fantastic way to publicly acknowledge your best team members and let the community at large know what your people are made of! And of course, [a personal connection](#) is also a great way to influence a decision.



Game ON!

From now until October 15th, here's your cheat sheet for securing Caring Stars status:

1. Get great reviews from your happy customers.
2. Respond to negative reviews by either contesting to remove them, or by publishing a business response.
3. Wait, watch, respond: after October 15th, closely monitor your listing and rapidly respond to any new/negative reviews, and monitor your online reputation by Google-ing your business name weekly (to make sure there's nothing concerning or negative in Google News, for example).

Every day, your community does great things. Why not spread the word?



This article has been brought to you by [Caring.com](#) in partnership with [Senior Housing Forum](#).

