



Want Better Leads? Think Like a Prospect

By Steve Moran

For a moment, close your eyes, take a deep breath and imagine . . .

You are a first-time prospect beginning a search for senior living for a family member, let's say it's your mom.

You are stressed. You have been designated the "family point person." It is your job to gather information and report back so all your siblings can make an informed decision.

And you don't have a clue where to begin.

But you have instructions.

Your brother doesn't want it to cost very much because of his kids in college. He thinks, "Mom should have enough." "Oh!" he adds, "and make it close to my work." Your sister doesn't have instructions, but she has guilt. She will not stop crying. "But she is the one who took care of us! Why can't she stay with me and my Great Danes? and buh . . . buh . . . buh . . . what if it's . . . stinky!"

And, then there is your Mom . . . What about her? She has always worried about being a burden, but what does she want? What if you suggest someplace that ends up being terrible?

You think you remember seeing Joan Lunden on TV talking about senior stuff, but maybe that was Joe Namath and Reverse Mortgages, or was it the lady that can't get up? You know there is a senior living place down the street from the dry cleaners, but it's called uh . . . "Brook-stones?" But wait . . . didn't Brookstone go bankrupt?

Where do you go? Where do we all go . . . ?

We power-up our phones or our laptops and seize that all-knowing, inviting, magical looking glass . . . Internet Search.

Assisted Living Near Me

No matter if it is Bing, Yahoo, or Duck-Duck-Go, it means the same thing . . . Google. In fact, there are 6,000 searches for Senior Living every hour. And you don't begin by typing in "Brookstone's" – you search for what you know "<Your Town> Assisted Living" or "Assisted Living Near Me."

Guess what pops cheerfully to the top of most pages in California? LookingforCare.com

Introducing the “Hotels.com*” of Senior Living

In an interview with Debra Draves, CEO and Founder of LookingforCare.com (a Senior Housing Forum partner) and Fawn Campbell, Executive Officer at Northland Consultancy Firm. During her tenure as VP of Sales and Marketing at Westmont Senior Living, Fawn was an early supporter.

... the public and our prospects already know what a powerful search tool it is.

Fawn remembers, “I was adamant about Westmont subscribing . . . the idea and the platform are that powerful. Think about your own buying/booking habits, if it’s not for the rewards programs, do you ever select individual hotels from Google anymore? No, we choose aggregators like Trivago or Kayak and the reason is simple . . . we want to see ALL the choices in one place on a platform that is easy to filter. Amazon gave us this shopping standard and now nearly every industry uses aggregators. The real question is why did it take Senior Housing so long?”

“Multi-family apartment rentals beat us to the punch years ago with Apartments.com and ForRent.com. These days, developers wouldn’t think of starting a lease-up without subscribing to these sites. It’s automatic . . . just like the way we once felt about the Yellow Pages. At Westmont, I realized LookingforCare.com was capturing significant traffic and I wanted our communities to appear on the top of their search results.

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“But it’s all in the results . . . we subscribed when they were building their traffic and now Debra tells me her traffic has nearly doubled. But even back then, we attributed four move-ins to LookingforCare.com within 100 days and we had an inquiry-to-move-in conversion rate of nearly 12%.

“It never has been more important to pay attention to every marketing dollar. NIC reported CA AL occupancy rates slipped below 89% in 2018 for the first time since 2012. This is even scarier when you consider DSS has 600+ pending licenses for an almost 20,000 additional units. You think it’s tough in California now, wait until supply increases 10%! All this construction represents an irrational exuberance about the “Silver Tsunami.” I remind my clients that this wave is nearly a decade away and riddled with prospects who will find it challenging to pay our prices, since they do not possess the same “saver” mentality that marked the Depression-Era generation.

“Given this reality, all my clients are encouraged to leverage every single marketing dollar towards attributable, trackable media that performs and LookingforCare.com tops the list.”

Debra interjects, “Fawn always makes me blush, but we simply built a platform that we wished existed when we were looking for care for our own families. All of us in this company come from senior living ops, sales and marketing, so we understand your pressures -- particularly those caused by today’s occupancy challenges. But we have also been senior living consumers and have first-hand experience with that side of the ‘search.’ Our goal was to build a solution that improved the process for both families and providers.”

Current Expansion Plans and Budgeting

LookingforCare.com is currently only available in California but will be available in key states by Q3 and nationwide by the end of 2019. Neither a PPC or a Pay-per-Move-in model, at current subscription rates, alleviating one move-in from an online agency would pay for over two years of LookingforCare.com.



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