

CHANCERY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This article focuses on how three companies (Vi, Arrow Senior Living and The Ridge Senior Living) used a variety of innovative marketing strategies. Whether they opted for innovative social media outreach or the classic "old-school" tactics, the innovative marketing strategies have shown their strengths in attracting more prospects and generating higher sales before the epidemic has fully subsided.

Instagram Moments and Old-School Tactics: How Senior Living Providers Are Winning Leads As Market Heats Up

With Covid-19 vaccinations steadily increasing and leads and move-ins returning, it seems the senior living industry is approaching the light at the end of its pandemic tunnel.

But that doesn't mean senior living providers can rest on their laurels and watch move-ins flow in on their own. With much of the industry in lease-up after many long and hard months and lingering restrictions on in-person gatherings, providers are having to get more creative in how they attract leads and stand out in their markets.

Three providers — Vi, Arrow Senior Living and The Ridge Senior Living — know that challenge firsthand.

While all three companies have seen leads, move-ins and occupancy tick up in recent weeks, they attribute that in part to some new, forward-thinking marketing strategies, such as building community “gnome gardens” to create Instagrammable “drive-by moments,” utilizing new ways to engage prospects via remote video conferencing, or scaled-down in-person events and rekindling “old-school” campaigns with mailers and giveaways.

For instance, Arrow Senior Living spent last year cultivating and deepening relationships with prospects — and now, as demand is beginning to return to the industry, the St. Louis-based company is starting to reap the rewards, according to Cassie Tweten, vice president of sales.

“When everybody got really quiet, we actually got really loud,” Tweten said Thursday during an Argentum webinar on lead generation, which was moderated by SHN Business Reporter Chuck Sudo.

Implementing more creative marketing strategies has helped all three of those companies this year. For instance, The Ridge Senior Living saw its top lead generation month ever in April, while Arrow's move-ins are double its current rate of move-outs. And at Vi, April sales were 40% above budgeted expectations for the month.

Getting loud

When the pandemic hit and lead generation slowed down in 2020, Arrow's salespeople dug into their existing lead base, made calls and endeavored to connect with prospects online and through social media.

"People were staying home and not referring anyone," Tweten said. "So, we put a lot of energy into helping make our prospects and their families happy."

That led to some creative practices in connecting with prospects. For example, Arrow's staff created "gnome gardens" on the front lawns of their communities consisting of "every single knickknack you could possibly imagine," Tweten said.

"We created ... Instagram moments where you could take a picture and post about us online," Tweten said. "And it created an [excuse] to drive by and see us."

Arrow also posted video updates online and created a virtual event calendar for all of the 29 buildings the provider manages, to hold events that the entire portfolio could participate in.

"It allowed our prospects to try us on ... because unlike them having to sit at lunch with us, they could just privately be in the event, see how people were engaging and read the faces of the residents," Tweten said. "It also allowed adult children who lived out of state to figure out or to see how we were."

Those practices, coupled with a policy of transparency in communication, helped put prospects' minds at ease — and it showed them "that we were taking care of their loved ones," Tweten added.

Vi, on the other hand, went "old school" and resurrected some of its marketing practices from the 1990s and 2000s, according to David Egeland, the company's vice president of sales and marketing. That helped the Chicago-based operator drive new referrals and hold its roughly 90% occupancy rate in 2021.

"We were doing a lot of digital and traditional advertising, but we still saw that leads were soft, going into the fourth quarter [of 2020], so we started doing some old-school things," Egeland said during the webinar Thursday.

For example, the company sent out pre-filled out business reply cards (BRCs) to prospective leads for its entire portfolio of communities. Vi also began canvassing residents for referrals, offering macaroons or other treats to residents who could refer enough of their friends.

“[It was] nothing too sexy, but it really worked, and we got a ton of referrals out of that,” Egeland said.

Vi also had launched a new website last August, which helped drive digital traffic and leads to the provider. The company’s salespeople also took time to clean up its lead bank during the pandemic’s slower months, as did Arrow and The Ridge Senior Living.

While The Ridge Senior Living — which has three communities in Utah and Colorado — didn’t halt or slow its marketing efforts during the pandemic, it did change up its messaging, according to Marti DiTaranto, vice president of sales and marketing.

Like some other senior living providers have done, The Ridge Senior Living went from messaging that stressed the high-end nature of its communities to one centered on safety and sanitization. The company also worked with GlynnDevins on its marketing strategy.

“For example, in all of our communities, we installed an air filtration system where it actually scrubs the Covid-19 virus, flu viruses and allergens on a regular basis,” DiTaranto said. “That has paid off for us.”

One strategy that Vi, Arrow and The Ridge Senior Living didn’t utilize as much were concessions on monthly rent. Vi uses them sparingly, typically on entrance fees where necessary; Arrow sees them as a seldom-used tool in the toolbox; and The Ridge Senior Living shies away from them.

“If you are priced competitively you have a good product, there is no reason for rent concessions — and that can be really hard for sales teams when everybody else in town is cutting prices,” DiTaranto said. “It really takes being able to have those conversations with your prospects that are coming in as to why we don’t cut our rates.”

Original Article:

<https://seniorhousingnews.com/2021/05/06/instagram-moments-and-old-school-tactics-how-senior-living-providers-are-winning-leads-as-market-heats-up/>

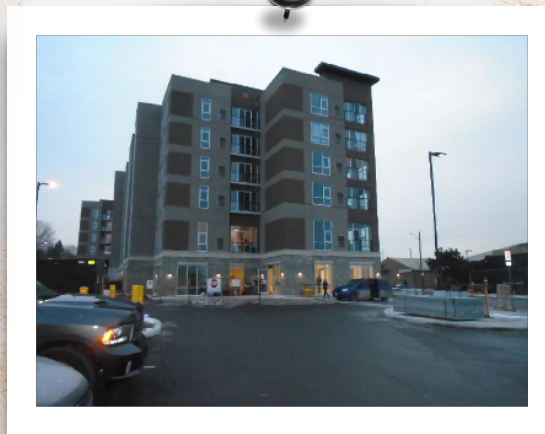
Bartlett Project Update

The Bartlett Seniors Housing Complex will be a 129-unit apartment building designed for active senior living, located at 550 Bond Street in Oshawa, ON. The Bartlett represents an affordable alternative to conventional seniors housing, offering services that permit seniors to live independently, on an à-la-carte basis through a concierge, in a regular apartment building, while providing the comfort to seniors and their families that care will be available in short order should the need arise.

- Certificate of substantial performance was issued on March 19th, 2021 by Independent Project Managers.
- The Bistro opening preparations are underway and the menu has been finalized.
- Scuppers on the roof have been installed.
- Marketing during Covid continues to be a challenge but the marketing department continues to work in full swing. The marketing team continues to leverage digital marketing platforms to connect with prospective tenants.
- For Easter, the tenants of The Bartlett came together for an Easter Food Drive Donation to give back to the community. Collectively, they gathered nonperishable items to donate to those in need in the Durham Region. The Bartlett was able to donate 111 lbs of food, which will help serve 93 meals.
- Similarly for Family Day and Valentine's Day, the concierge team surprised tenants with delicious homemade Valentine's Day treats. Our tenants were thrilled. Just our way of spreading a little extra love.

CHANCERY MONTHLY

PROJECT UPDATE



Chancery Seniors Housing Investments Inc. is a private real-estate investment firm with a focus on seniors housing. Powered by its two strong founding partners, Suske Capital Inc. and LD Capital Corp., Chancery creates a team with the expertise and experience of over 55 years in real estate and seniors housing developments with an estimated completion value of over \$5 billion.

For more information about our company and projects, please visit www.chanceryseniors.com