

Senior Living Social Media: Why Are We So Far Behind?

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We didn't know how good we had it:

Like most of you, I began my career during the age of the dinosaurs. I was the business development equivalent of the original hunter-gatherer. My tools: a car, a phone, a large plastic box of organized collateral, and the trusty business card. In person meetings were the lone way to get things done. We grinded it out and when we left the meeting the only things our prospect had to reference was a glossy trifold.

Sure, we all had websites. But no one went to them. Not really. At most, a dot com visit was nothing more than a curiosity or to retrieve basic contact information and peruse photos. You remember.

But the dinosaurs are long gone now. Snuffed out by a murky and confusing cloud of data. Likes, mentions, follows, comments, DM's, ratings, SEO. These are the new creatures we must learn to hunt. We don't even have to leave our offices to know everything about our clients, prospects, vendors, and competition. Murky, yes, but not unconquerable - unless you're talking about one specific industry...ours.

Senior Living has found itself lacking in social media interest and use. Yes, most Senior Living organizations utilize advanced health-chart tracking and predictive care platforms. And, yes, we're all using CRM's (or should be). These industry-specific musts are truly an achievement in high-tech care-based solutions.

I marvel at our industry's embrace of clinical technology. It has undoubtedly saved and prolonged many lives. While social media and digital marketing will never rival these advances in clinical care, I'd like to suggest 3 reasons we should embrace social media; and why you should trust its management to a certified professional social media manager (SMM).

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SOLUTIONS WITHIN YOUR POWER

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1. Consistency is Key

A highly consistent message across all platforms is a must. Posting times and days might vary slightly, but your SMM should be capable of pushing posts to your preferred platforms in a uniform manner. Most SMM's utilize Hootsuite, Monday.com, or a similar social media management system to create one post and then push it to all platforms simultaneously. Make sure your SMM is certified in their management system. While most systems tend to be user friendly, it pays to have a true expert at the wheel for easy tracking, changes, and ongoing communication with your audience. It also helps when it comes to sharing access to calendars and streams.

2. Cleaner is Better

Have you ever seen a post that has a referenced link at the bottom that is about 700 characters long? How about a photo that doesn't make sense with the post? Or my personal favorite: a photo that's been autoformatted and now shows one small portion at 300%. These are the calling cards of non-expert social media managers. A true SMM will have a design and editing background to not only shorten links and format photos (trickier than it sounds since most social media platforms have different size requirements), but they'll also be able to filter and optimize your posts to ensure your audience has a clean and expected experience when navigating your posts. ;)

3. Rules of Engagement

I won't name names here, but one potential client prided themselves on responding to any comment on their social media within 2 hours. Obviously, I tested this. True, my question was answered in about ninety minutes. Also true that the information was incorrect and the answer suffered from poor grammar and NO capitalized words! An experienced SMM will have instant notifications sent to their phone or computer to ensure a fast response time. Most also utilize a key word algorithm to ensure a consistent and pre-proofed reply is sent to your consumer. This simple approach can save major headaches on the backend with a half-proofed reply - or worse, none at all.

I'm a convert. It's true. Maybe you feel your company's reputation is safe in the hands of a non-certified staff member. Maybe you can't afford an experienced SMM. But, if that's the case, I hope these guidelines have at least created some analysis of your current approach. If you are considering using an SMM, we're only a click away.

I'd send you my business card, but I'm afraid those were used as scrap paper long ago.

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