

## 10 TIPS FOR A COMPETITIVE MARKET

How can communities in competitive and oversaturated markets compete? Here are some ideas that are helpful when trying to create some distance between you and the competition.

### 1. **Zig when they zag.**

You don't always have to go head to head. Use alternative media, develop new messaging, host unique events, create new products and services. In other words, don't be part of the crowd.

### 2. **Protect your base.**

Core ZIP codes drive your occupancy. Be sure you're doing everything to stay in touch with those prospects first, before reaching into those further out in the core ZIP codes of your competitors.

### 3. **Know your audience.**

Communities serve different market segments. Do you know yours? Who's most likely to move to your community? Every option isn't your competitor. If you know whom you appeal to and target them with well-defined strategies and targeted tactics, you'll be way ahead of any competition.

### 4. **Make it personal.**

Build and work your referral network on every level. Of course residents, but resident families, staff, business partners and your board of directors. Everyone with a connection connects you to someone else.

### 5. **Exceed expectations.**

When consumers have many choices, they don't have to settle for second best. How's your resident satisfaction? Would they recommend you? Are your prospects experiencing exceptional customer service?

### 6. **Don't forget that everyone is in marketing.**

Tough markets require everyone's best effort, not just the marketing staff. Getting a steady stream of move-ins requires a coordinated effort from all areas of the community.

### 7. **How's your WOW factor?**

First impressions matter. From the look of the community to the greeting visitors receive, you can't afford to lose them at the front door.

### 8. **You can't whisper.**

Sure you want to be smart with your dollars, but you need to get noticed and sometimes that means screaming - with dollars. No one message can break through the noise of a competitive market. Sometimes it takes a lot of messages for a long time just to be heard.

### 9. **Be sure they can find you.**

Remember that it's more cost-effective to be found than to find. A fully integrated search program is super-critical in a competitive market. All the choices are at the consumer's fingertips.

### 10. **Be new even if you're old.**

New gets noticed even in a tough market. How can you create new with design upgrades, renovations, new programs, new service offerings or contract options?