

SENIORS HOUSING UPDATE

ASHA Upcoming Meetings Calendar

2021 MID-YEAR MEETING
July 26-27

Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe
Incline Village, NV

**2021 CHAIRMAN'S
CIRCLE EVENT**
October 11-12

Hotel Bennett
Charleston, SC

**2021 FALL EXECUTIVE
BOARD MEETING**
November 1

Marriott Marquis
Houston, TX

2022 ANNUAL MEETING
January 24-26

Arizona Biltmore
Phoenix, AZ

2022 MID-YEAR MEETING
June 7-8

Omni Interlocken Resort
Broomfield, CO

**2022 CHAIRMAN'S
CIRCLE EVENT**
November 2-3

Ritz Carlton
Sarasota, FL

The Unexpected Upside of Selling Throughout the Pandemic

Caught in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, senior living sales and marketing teams were forced to abruptly veer away from the face-to-face interactions that had always been paramount in building the relationships that ultimately drive move-ins.

But with remarkable determination and ingenuity, they overcame the quarantines and social distancing restrictions throughout 2020, thanks in large part to the resourceful ways they relied on digital tools and virtual communication to reinforce the sense of trust and confidence with prospects that's so pivotal to maintaining and growing occupancy.

Now, much of what they learned during the last 12 months by engaging prospects through high-tech channels will be an indispensable addition to their marketing and sales plans going forward.

Interacting with sales leads through virtual tours and communications was the immediate fallback tactic when communities were forced to limit visitation. This was where not only the sales teams, but also their colleagues across all departments, came up with novel suggestions to heighten the impact of Zoom calls and Facetime visits.

ZOOM HAPPY HOURS AND COOKING CLASSES

At MBK Senior Living, with 33 locations throughout the West Coast and Southwest, "we had to get really creative, whether it was with virtual Zoom happy hours or Zoom cooking classes," recalled **Christy Van Der Westhuizen**, vice president of sales and marketing.

For example, she said "our chef would drop off dry ingredients at our prospects' doorsteps, and then at three o'clock all the prospects would be on Zoom. He would show them how to make his mom's famous pasta dish, and everyone had the ingredients.

"We've had a lot of drive-through events where people got to know us a little bit more. They might have a breakfast burrito on us or get a take-and-bake pizza from us. We want them to taste our food so they can experience what a great job we do in our kitchens. This helps us stand out and make better connections," she explained.

While at the outset of the pandemic there was apprehension about how effective virtual communication would be, "for the most part, what I'm hearing from the community sales teams is that prospective residents are getting very familiar with how to use technology," Van Der Westhuizen noted. "It might be a little awkward at first, but people are getting very comfortable with these virtual interactions.

continued inside



Adam Bryan

director of sales and marketing

HAWTHORN SENIOR LIVING



The other thing that we learned about virtual tours is it helps us capture the attention of a lead very quickly.



Jon Ollmann

chief operating officer

HAWTHORN SENIOR LIVING



The pandemic gave our sales teams an added sense of purpose.



Christy Van Der Westhuizen

vice president of sales and marketing

MBK SENIOR LIVING



We've had a lot of drive-through events where people got to know us a little bit more.

"We try to introduce team members, especially our executive director, who we consider the sales leader of the community and needs to be involved in every virtual tour, as well as in person," she said. "We want to introduce residents as well, because it's great to show a virtual tour of the spaces that they'll be living in, but there's nothing better than feeling the heartbeat of the community, which is our residents and team members. It's not just about the spaces. It's the smiling faces that they still experience even though we're wearing masks."

MBK's virtual tours and communications have been a big hit, judging from the numbers. In March, there were more move-ins than in any other month in the company's past. And Van Der Westhuizen is confident this is just the beginning of a longer trend leading to a rebound in occupancy.

ACCELERATING THE SALES CYCLE

As its sales teams spent more time engaging prospects through virtual communications and they became more confident with the new format, Hawthorn Senior Living found there was an unexpected upside: It accelerated the sales cycle.

Adam Bryan, director of sales and marketing overseeing occupancy at

Hawthorn's 72 communities nationwide, reported that "it's really been a game changer for folks considering a move to a senior living community on the other side of the country. It's definitely something that we're going to continue.

"The other thing that we learned about virtual tours is it helps us capture the attention of a lead very quickly. When we've got them on the phone to schedule an in-person tour, we ask while we've got you on the phone, why not hop on the computer and let me show you a couple of things about our community? Let me show you why you should come in and why we could be a great place for you.

"Virtual tours sounded like a great idea as an alternative to meeting with prospects, but what we've experienced is it's an opportunity to advance the sale. It's absolutely something that we'll continue. It's another step in the sales cycle that turned out to be a positive," he commented.

Turning to Hawthorn's digital marketing outreach, Bryan said the pandemic triggered a greater emphasis on its Facebook presence. "We just started using social media as an organization prior to the pandemic. It was not a huge focus of ours. In 2018, social media accounted for zero percent of our web traffic. In 2019, it grew to about two percent of our web

traffic. By the end of 2020, 10 percent of our Internet leads started at our social media.

"We show the lifestyle that we offer in a Hawthorn community by engaging our activities teams and our management teams. When we weren't able to have events, which as an organization is how we filled our communities in the past, we turned those dollars toward digital advertising.

"With regard to our salespeople," he continued, "we were collecting deposits and had some of our biggest months ever when we weren't accepting move-ins. This was because of those virtual tours, working through the phone banks and sharpening our skills. Once we started doing move-ins again, we saw some of our biggest months ever coming out of the shutdown."

Jon Ollmann, Hawthorn's chief operating officer, added that "the pandemic gave our sales teams an added sense of purpose. We talked a lot about our Hawthorn heart and our genuine care and concern for the individuals in the communities. The sales teams really embraced that. That bond is going to carry forward in 2021, 2022 and beyond. This is more than just a job. This is a commitment to helping people live better lives. On the sales side, that was very rewarding to see." ▲

Senior Living Hall of Fame Class of 2021 Inductees

Four pioneering industry leaders have been named to the Senior Living Hall of Fame and will be inducted during the upcoming Mid-Year Meeting in Lake Tahoe on July 26. Honorees include the late Carl Campbell of CAMLU, Robert Thomas and William Thomas of Senior Star, and Patricia Will of Belmont Village Senior Living.

The Senior Living Hall of Fame recognizes the visionaries who have distinguished themselves through uncommon foresight and ground-breaking innovation. These are industry leaders with an unwavering commitment to community lifestyles that enhance choice, independence, dignity and personalized service.



Carl Campbell • • CAMLU

Carl Campbell, who passed away in 2020 at age 98, was a pioneer investor, property owner and mentor to many in the seniors housing business. His legacy includes a senior living company that once spanned more than 180 communities in 21 states and numerous business and philanthropic endeavors. Carl's influence touched a number of senior care companies, including Frontier Management, Holiday Retirement, Integral Senior Living and Life Care Centers of America.



Robert and William Thomas • • Senior Star

Senior Star is so much more than senior living. It is about business excellence and bringing focus to community, philanthropy, volunteerism and industry service while treating all these elements with the same passion and importance as business success. It's about making a difference. Twin brothers, Bob and Bill are co-founders of their family-owned company, Senior Star, headquartered in Tulsa, OK.

Bob is in his 25th year of board service to the Alzheimer's Association and one of three founding members of the Alzheimer's Impact Movement, a sister organization, where he remains the board treasurer. Bill currently serves on the National Alzheimer's Association Board. As ASHA's Chairman in 2006 - 2007, Bill introduced an annual, strategic Seniors Housing PAC campaign that led to a ten-fold increase in annual giving.



Patricia Will • • Belmont Village Senior Living

Patricia Will, Founder and CEO of Belmont Village Senior Living, has been an innovative force in the seniors housing sector since she launched her company in 1997, a time of rapid expansion in the industry. Her company set out to fill a void in the assisted living space by combining the best practices of gerontology, hospitality and architecture to create a high-end product, the cornerstone of which is programming designed to truly enrich residents' lives. Among many accomplishments, Patricia brought U.S. -style senior living to Mexico, with her 135-unit high-rise in Mexico City, a city of 21 million with virtually no senior living prior the time it opened in 2017. Patricia served as Chair of ASHA (2008 - 2009) and is on the Board of the California Assisted Living Association (CALA), the Texas Assisted Living Association (TALA), and the Executive Advisory Board of Argentum. ▲



A SENIOR LIVING RESOURCE

2020
ASHA 50
The 50 largest U.S.
seniors housing real estate
owners and operators



The Hacienda at the River in Tucson, Arizona,
operated by Watermark Retirement Communities.

Special supplement to
• Seniors Housing Business
• Heartland Real Estate Business
• Northeast Real Estate Business
• Southeast Real Estate Business
• Texas Real Estate Business
• Western Real Estate Business

An exclusive
report from the
American Seniors
Housing Association

Where You Live Matters

ASHA's Where You Live Matters is an online resource for unbiased, expert guidance for older adults and their families covering the entire senior living landscape. As our consumer-facing initiative, WhereYouLiveMatters.org reaches thousands of potential residents and their families every day. In addition, the website features a Community Locator that links to more than 4,000 ASHA member communities located in the U.S. and Canada. For more information about using the resources of WYLM or adding your owned or operated communities to the Community Locator, please visit [joinWYLM.org](https://www.joinWYLM.org)

2021 ASHA 50

Plans are underway to conduct the annual ASHA 50 survey, which will identify the largest 50 owners and largest 50 operators of senior living in the U.S. This authoritative ranking has been conducted by ASHA every year since 1994. The 2021 ASHA 50 rankings will appear in a special supplement in the August/September issue of Seniors Housing Business. The survey will be conducted as of June 1, 2021.

For additional information about the ASHA 50, including advertising, please contact Richard Kelley of Seniors Housing Business at (914) 468-0818 or rkelly@francemediainc.com

For further information on any of the topics in this Seniors Housing Update, please contact:

David Schless

202.885.5560

david@ashaliving.org

Meghan "Megs" Bertoni

202.885.5571

megs@ashaliving.org

Jeanne McGlynn Delgado

202.885.5561

jeanne@ashaliving.org

Sheffield "Sheff" Richey

202.885.5563

sheff@ashaliving.org

Doris Maultsby

202.885.5562

doris@ashaliving.org

For access to all links referenced in this Seniors Housing Update, please login to the "Members Area" of the ASHA website (www.ashaliving.org) and select **ASHA Updates > 2021**.

To receive login credentials,
contact Meghan Bertoni at
megs@ashaliving.org.