

G5 MarTech Series | Part 1

The Human Element of Senior Living Marketing





Introduction

Welcome, we're glad you're here! From March 2020, to vaccine approval, to now, it's been a roller coaster ride. Senior living communities are emerging a little more agile, relieved, empathetic, curious, and at the end of the day, human. So are your residents and their families.

Seniors and their families expect communities to be aware and responsive to their changing needs – which means your marketing should be hyper-focused on the human element of senior living, aka your residents and their families.

Our new monthly MarTech Series is here to help. From now through June 2021, we'll share monthly reports, webinars, and blogs full of the latest MarTech trends and best-practices. We'll help you bridge the gap between cutting-edge marketing technology (MarTech) and powerful branding to create thoughtfully crafted, frictionless user experiences.

Here's what you can expect to learn from the MarTech Series:

February: Be Authentic: The Online Experience

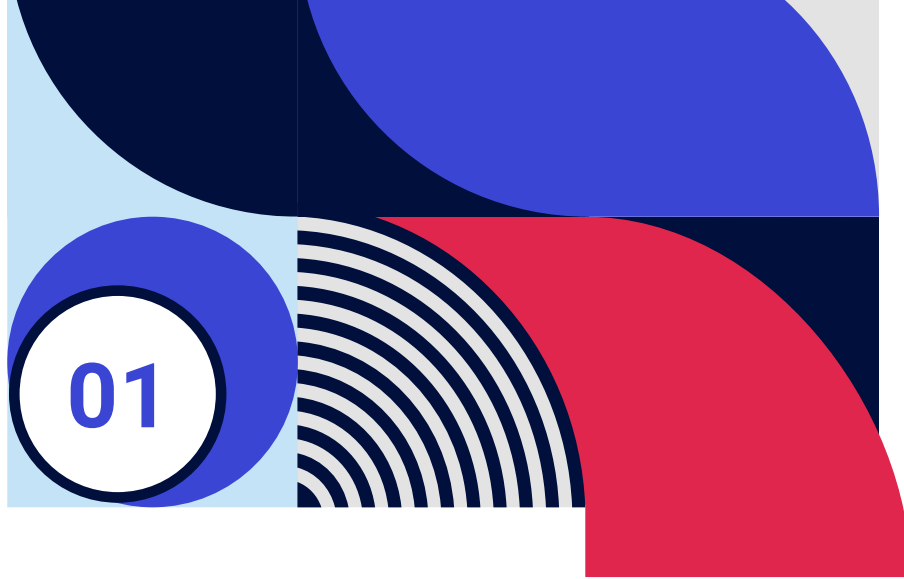
March: Be Agile: Digital Trends

April: Be Savvy: Technology

May: Be Grounded: Data + CDP

June: Be Creative: Brand + User Experience

Seniors and their loved ones are only one click away from thinking "I want to live there," or "I trust them." In our increasingly digital lives, we know you and your team, as well as future residents and their families, don't have time (or clicks) to spare. Let's go.



The Senior Living Online Experience

The pandemic has transformed far-reaching aspects of our lives. COVID-19 is a market disruptor and world shaker-upper. Fortunately, there is some hope on the horizon with at-risk populations receiving lifesaving vaccines first. At the time of publication, we've been in this for nearly a year, which is long enough to pick up on a few senior living specific online experiences that are proving helpful when operating in an ever-changing world.



Let's Go Virtual

It's good to remember how quickly "nice-to-have" online experiences changed to "must-have" expectations this year. Many of the digital trends we are seeing now weren't necessarily new, but COVID-19 absolutely accelerated online shopping. Adult children who are researching senior living options expect a curated experience like those provided by Amazon, Stitch Fix, Netflix, and meal-kit services with build-your-own-menu options. According to [McKenzie and Corp](#), technology adoption in North America is three years ahead of the average. With 65% of customer interactions happening online, companies pivoted quickly to adopt technology-assisted, online offerings.

As consumers adopt digital practices, and increase their expectations, the virtual offerings your community adds now are expected to hold post-pandemic. Excellent video content and Virtual Sales Assistants (VSAs), a website feature that engages with viewers to answer their questions, are no exception.

Today's instant-everything consumers — including seniors and their families — demand immediate answers. If your sales and marketing teams are bogged-down with repetitive questions about availability, community amenities, tour scheduling, and precautions, adding a VSA or some thoughtfully curated video content to address these frequently asked questions to your website is a great way to relieve the pressure.

Can we share some good news? These two solutions can be easily added to your website, and are ready to provide a warm, welcoming first impression of your community. They free up your sales team to focus on high-impact discussions with seniors and their loved ones, all while making sure simple things such as amenities, care levels, and tour videos, don't get lost in the shuffle.

“The average customer journey in senior living is 29 days, with 13 digital touchpoints, or opportunities to connect.”

(G5 Data, 2020)



Three Perks of Virtual Sales Assistants

Six-feet apart of the new normal. It is vital to engage with your future residents and their families in safe, accommodating ways, before they explore other communities. Here are three benefits of a VSA when it comes to communicating with your future residents and their loved ones.

01 Efficiency

No need for your sales and marketing teams to spend their time answering simple questions via form fills and phone calls. VSAs allow seniors and their families to explore floor plans, watch tour videos, view photos, and schedule a virtual tour appointment. As an added bonus, some communities include care levels and community amenities, which allows residents to self-qualify based on their individual needs.

VSAs that use Natural Language Processing (NLP) capabilities to understand the intent of users' questions can easily respond to inquiries in real-time. Above all, a VSA streamlines your onsite sales and marketing team's ability to provide consistent, friendly customer service and increase occupancy.

02 Speedy Service

As the lives of seniors and their families continue to become more digitally distracted, we need a speedy way to answer their questions, or they're likely to look for answers elsewhere. The average Virtual Sales Assistant's response time is less than 2 seconds, compared with a human response time of 76 seconds. Consumers expect immediacy, and a 74 second difference can feel like an eternity and be off-putting.

Moreover, according to [Northridge Group's State of Customer Service Experience Report](#), 63% of consumers felt there was an ease in contacting a business via online chat, and 66% found their questions were answered most quickly via online chat. If you aren't able to answer future residents' questions within an hour, many may reach out to your community in a different channel, essentially doubling your team's workload.



03 Always-On

A VSA is that mythical teammate who can answer questions flawlessly and never needs a day off – or a break. They're attentive and waiting to warmly greet future residents and their families day, night, weekends, and holidays, too. Most importantly, they can simplify the research process for seniors and their loved ones. We know families have more on their plates than ever with many working, while their children learn, from home. When you add navigating pandemic precautions and caring, or finding care, for a loved one on top of that, it's a lot to handle. They may not have time to research communities, and ask their most pressing questions when your office is open. A VSA can meet them where they are, and move their conversations with your community forward on their own schedule.



G5 PREFERRED PARTNERS

You only get one opportunity to make a first impression. A Virtual Sales Assistant, as well as community-curated video content, are always ready to greet potential residents and ensure your community consistently provides a memorable, friendly, and welcoming experience. You want your MarTech providers to work together in a meaningful way. At G5, we partner with best-in-class providers to ensure that you're creating an authentic and engaging online experience for researching seniors and their families. By working with partners like FURTHER and OneDay – both trusted leaders in prospect engagement and video production for senior living – you create a digital-door to your community. Stand out in this space and encourage researching seniors and their families to choose your community over the competition.





Contact Us, Contactless

COVID-19 brought with it a focus on cleanliness and the need to establish new procedures for virus transmission precautions. That's led to the virtual world of contactless interactions that we are getting more comfortable navigating each day. There are few industries in which the focus on cleanliness and contactless interaction is more pronounced than in senior living. Providing high-quality service and reducing pandemic-related risks are at the core of a senior living community's focus. Here are four contactless techniques to consider for your community:

01 Social Media

The truth is, we don't really know what the world looks like after the pandemic. Social media keeps us connected and can make us feel like we're together, even if we aren't. We're craving connection, and as a result, [social media usage is up](#), with just about half of users spending more time scrolling through their phones.

Social media gives your community an authentic way to communicate and connect with seniors and their families. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), 46% of Americans over the age of 65 use Facebook, and 38% use YouTube. They're drawn to these social media platforms to connect with their family and loved ones. Consider posting ideas that engage both your residents, future residents, and their

loved ones. Try postcard prompts to ask grandma questions like: what was her favorite subject in school and why, or what is her favorite childhood memory? Share photos of your community and residents participating in activities to bridge the gap and build connection with those not able to visit.

If you don't already, it might be a great opportunity to consider doing more paid, or sponsored social media content. As a rule of thumb, you want to be where seniors and their families are, and paid social operates this way as well. Do an audit of your social media accounts to see which channels drive the most engagement, and then allocate appropriate amounts to each channel to encourage conversation in this engaging space.

02 Video Calls

Keeping seniors in touch and connected with their loved ones is good for everyone’s mental health and wellbeing. To keep your residents connected, consider supplying platforms – Google Nest Hub, Facebook Portal, FaceTime on iPads, or Google Hangout – to help facilitate video calls with loved ones. A recent [AARP study](#) found that smartphone adoption is at 62% among adults aged 70 and older.

Moreover, according to [Amwell](#), 45% of American adults aged 65 and older have participated in video calls using FaceTime, Skype, or Google Hangouts. It goes to show that seniors and their families are more prepared than we might think to bridge this digital divide. Certainly, for current residents and their families, video calls are the best option for a socially distanced connection.

“45% of American adults aged 65 and older have participated in video calls using FaceTime, Skype, or Google Hangouts.”

(Amwell, 2019)





03 Virtual Tours

Virtual and pre-recorded tours are great ways to share your community ethos and let seniors and their families learn what life looks like within your community, without ever stepping foot inside. For pre-recorded tours, include interviews with current residents and family members of loved ones, interviews with staff members, and of course videos of the various floor plans, community spaces (both indoors and outdoors), dining room, and enrichment or other activities. You can break your tour into bite-sized chunks so that future residents and their families can watch the topics they are most interested in. Video conferencing meetings, in addition to FaceTime, Zoom, and Skype tours, give seniors and their families the opportunity to e-meet your staff and ask additional questions. Curious about other ways your community can navigate the ongoing pandemic? Learn more with our Marketing to the Modern Senior [Checklist](#).



04 Video Content

Did you know that [54% of consumers want to see more video content](#) from a brand or business they support? Video content is a great addition to any virtual tour offerings at your community. Record interviews with staff members to show their genuine care for community residents. Use resident testimonials to allow researching seniors to envision what their life will feel like choosing your community as their new home. [Two out of three people](#) are more likely to make a purchase after watching a testimonial video about a company,

product, or service. This genuine approach to sharing the essence of your community rings true with future residents and their families. Plus, it shares your community's unique value, and can move the needle to increasing occupancy. Editing these videos down into short clips empowers future residents and their families to choose their own adventure and access the information they are most curious to learn. The hidden bonus is that they can revisit your video content as needed during their decision-making process.

Backed by the Best

Contactless options need to be backed with a cutting-edge, performance-centric website. At G5, we believe marketing matters more than ever. That's why we invest in innovation that makes finding, engaging, and moving into your community as seamless as possible. We're here to help you navigate this ongoing unknown and give you the insights to make data-backed decisions that will guide you to our next new normal.



Be Human:

The Senior Living Online Experience



This has been a difficult year. The disproportionate impact of the ongoing pandemic on vulnerable populations, including seniors, has magnified this year's challenge for your residents, and your team. Choosing a senior living community for a loved one is a weighty, emotional decision in normal times. We feel this now, more than ever, in our current climate.

Older Americans and their families have been hit hardest by the pandemic. Not wanting to put loved ones at risk, some families have kept their

distance from their elderly family and friends. Most senior living communities have been off-limits to visitors, which means their residents haven't seen their loved ones in many months. Meanwhile, since many people are working from home, some families have opted to care for aging loved ones in their homes. Still others are making daily visits to lend a hand to elderly family members who are living independently.

Many of these changes may have seemed like a temporary situation, but seniors' care needs may have changed.

And, even with good news like vaccines we can't simply, "wait until COVID is over," because these shifts in consumer behavior are likely to stick. Connecting with seniors who have varied needs isn't new territory for your sales and marketing teams, but how we would traditionally navigate these conversations is changing. We don't have a crystal ball, and we don't know what the next few weeks and months will bring, but we do know that extra empathy and transparency about your community's approach goes a long way.

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