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Catering to the Active Adult Homebuyer

By Drew Knight



Looking for info on how to cater to the active adult home buyer? The key hides within the word “active.”

While it may seem like Millennials are the only generation people are talking these days, another very important trend is taking place in the housing industry: more and more Baby Boomers are nearing the retirement age and seeking active adult communities.

In fact, many homebuilders have shifted their focus to creating communities that cater to the active adult buyer in their [2017 plans](#). If that means more active adult communities will soon be on the market, it also means more homes that cater to active adult homebuyers will need to be sold — this is where you, the real estate agent, come in.

If you’re in the new homes market, you might want to take a moment to understand what a 55+ homebuyer might be looking for in an active adult community. So, here’s what the professionals have to say. (Hint: The key word is “active.”)

For some home shoppers, there is a negative perception of an active adult or 55+ community.

You'll want to put that misconception to rest very fast.

"Perhaps they believe these types of communities are one step from assisted living," says Rob Krohn, franchise marketing manager with maintenance-free builder [Epcon Communities](#). "That is definitely not the case. They are vibrant communities of people looking to let go of the many burdens of owning a traditional home and are looking to pursue their dreams and interests."

Time spent mowing the lawn or making costly repairs can easily be spent on hobbies and enjoying the active lifestyle many of these communities offer via amenities like hiking and biking trails, pickle ball courts and community centers with daily events and activities.

The next step, like with any homebuyer, is to find out what makes them tick.

"Why are they thinking about moving? What in their lives are they looking to change or make better?" asks Krohn. "Understand their motivations and you'll understand how to match them with the right home and community."

For instance, maybe your buyers are both retired and only want a community that offers active community centers or maybe they're just seeking like-minded neighbors and a new sense of community. "Perhaps they aren't sure what they're looking for because they are thinking about the home and not the community," Krohn adds.

While you're at it, it's also important to think about their future needs as well.

"As an agent, make sure you look into items like zero-entry showers and baths, wide doorways for wheelchair accessibility, ramps or steps, a master bedroom on the first floor," says Lora Cusumano, a licensed real estate broker in the luxury New York and Florida markets.

A sensitive subject, these concerns might not be on the front of an active adult buyer's mind, but they could become apparent several years down the road.

"You should also find out what services are available on site and off site for the buyer," says Cusumano. "Things such as a bus service to the grocery store, health care services or hospitals and senior services may not be important to them now, but may be useful for their future."

By researching these topics, you can become an expert on all the opportunities your local active adult communities can offer. Visit these neighborhoods, talk to residents and find out everything you can about amenities, services and activities, nearby facilities and the various rules and regulations set in place — do residents really have to be 55 or up to live there?

"You should get copies of the community rules for your buyers to review," she adds. "They may find something too restrictive and choose not to look any further in that particular community."

In the end, just remember that active adult communities offer so many benefits to the Baby

Boomer generation. The key is to highlight that active lifestyle, bust misconceptions and remember the creature comforts — no more lawn mowing, no more noisy neighbors and busy roads.

“Jim Carrey, Meg Ryan and George Clooney are 55+,” says Krohn. “If they can relate these people to the perception of what people typically think when they picture an ‘active adult’ community, you can see there may be a cloudy picture of perception versus reality.”

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