

📅 SEPTEMBER 2, 2026 | 👤 BY PAIGE CERULLI

How Senior Care Communities Can Win Prospective Residents' Trust Before the First Visit

Trust can play a defining role in how prospective residents and their families choose a senior care community. Building that trust early is essential, and the process often begins well before a prospect schedules a tour or speaks with a sales counselor.

"Trust begins before a prospect submits an inquiry," says Elizabeth Fandel, chief marketing and innovation officer at [FellowshipLIFE](#). "Today's consumers are evaluating whether they believe in your organization before they decide whether they like your community."

Senior care communities use a variety of strategies to establish credibility from the earliest interactions and reinforce that trust throughout the prospect journey.

Read on to discover how senior care communities use authentic marketing, thoughtful communication, reputation-building, and firsthand experiences to earn prospects' trust before they make a decision.

Building Trust Through Authentic, Consistent Marketing

FellowshipLIFE builds trust through authentic storytelling that features real residents, team members, and families, rather than relying on scripted marketing. Its educational content also helps people navigate topics such as aging, downsizing, and health care without immediately trying to sell them on senior living. Just as importantly, the organization strives for consistency across its website, social media, digital advertising, online reviews, emails, and phone conversations so prospects encounter a clear and authentic brand experience at every touchpoint.

Delivering prompt, personalized follow-up is another important part of FellowshipLIFE's approach, helping demonstrate both responsiveness and empathy. "Every inquiry receives timely communication from a knowledgeable sales counselor," says Fandel.



Elizabeth Fandel, chief marketing and innovation officer at FellowshipLIFE

Marketing also needs to reflect what the operations team can consistently deliver. To keep campaigns authentic, FellowshipLIFE walks the community before launching them and photographs actual residents and team members whenever possible. The marketing team coordinates messaging with the Executive Director and department leaders and updates photography as the community evolves.

Turning Phone Conversations Into Trust-Building Opportunities

At [Hillcrest](#), Shirley Turner, director of sales and marketing, approaches conversations with prospective residents and their families with a kind and open tone. She recognizes that prospects may initially view staff members as “sales,” so she works to establish that her role is to help them navigate an important decision.

Knowing when to listen can be just as important as knowing what to say. “We are the teachers and professionals. We are the doctor to their challenges,” Turner says. Because reaching out for senior living assistance can be a new and serious experience, she focuses on reassuring prospects that it’s okay to ask for help.

Building a Reputation That Earns Trust Before the First Inquiry

Putting residents first has helped [Everlasting Services](#) establish a positive reputation in its local market, according to Marketing Director Alicia Brown. “Our reputation within the community helps to build trust before anyone even reaches out to us,” she says.

Brown uses initial phone conversations to determine whether the community can meet a prospective resident’s needs and expectations. “If we find on the phone that we can’t meet their needs and desires, or that their behaviors are too great, I’m honest,” she explains. “I want their loved one to be set up for success.”

That transparency can help families find a community that is truly the right fit while reducing the likelihood of unnecessary transfers. Even when Everlasting Services is not the best option for a prospective resident, Brown’s willingness to be candid can reinforce the organization’s reputation as a trustworthy resource.



Alicia Brown, marketing director at Everlasting Services

Content That Connects and Builds Confidence

At FellowshipLIFE, the highest-performing content consistently puts people at the center rather than focusing primarily on buildings. Fandel has found that several types of content are particularly effective at building confidence among prospective residents and families:

- Resident success stories that explain why someone chose the community and how their life has changed.
- Videos featuring residents, families and team members speaking naturally rather than reading scripted testimonials.
- Staff spotlights that demonstrate stability, compassion and long-term commitment.
- Educational articles that help families understand aging-related topics without promoting a particular community.

- Lifestyle videos showing daily life, wellness, dining, fitness, clubs and social engagement.
- Transparent virtual tours that accurately represent apartments, amenities and common spaces.

Authentic human experiences can help prospects envision themselves living in a community in ways that highly polished marketing photography may not. By showing what life is actually like, communities can give prospects a more meaningful sense of what they could expect as residents.

Adapting to Changing Search Behavior

Hillcrest continues to adapt its marketing strategy as the ways prospects discover and research senior living communities evolve. “We’re hearing more talk about finding Hillcrest via ChatGPT, and our marketing is responsive to all the ways a prospect, an adult child, or a family member can find us,” Turner explains.

Prospects now complete much of their research before ever speaking with a sales counselor, which has also influenced FellowshipLIFE’s strategy. The organization focuses on search engine optimization and local search visibility while using educational blogs, video storytelling, resident lifestyle content, and transparent pricing conversations to address prospects’ questions during the research process.

Rather than requiring people to call for basic information, the goal is to make useful answers readily available as they evaluate their options.

Visits and Trial Stays Help Build Confidence

Hillcrest regularly works with adults and families who are exploring assisted living but may not be ready to make a long-term commitment. “We have had success introducing prospects to Hillcrest through our Stay and See program,” says Turner. The program gives prospective residents an opportunity to experience the community firsthand before moving in and can also appeal to active seniors who are still considering their long-term housing options.

Frequent visits can further help prospects develop a genuine sense of the community. Hillcrest encourages prospective residents and families to return often, and its events include current residents so visitors can experience the community’s culture firsthand.



Shirley Turner, director of sales and marketing at Hillcrest

The physical setting also plays an important role in helping prospects understand what distinguishes Hillcrest. “Unlike the usual cookie-cutter, high-density retirement communities, Hillcrest is refreshingly different,” explains Turner. “We are seamlessly blended into La Verne in a serene neighborhood covering over 50 walkable acres. It’s something prospects need to see and experience to really appreciate.”

Advice for Senior Care Communities

For senior care communities looking to build stronger relationships with prospective residents and their families, Turner recommends prioritizing listening over trying to close a sale. “They came to you for a reason. It is our role to understand what they need and what they are asking,” she says.

Today's consumers are increasingly looking for authenticity, transparency, expertise, and evidence that a community will consistently deliver on its promises. As expectations change, senior care marketing can no longer depend solely on beautiful brochures or polished advertising to build confidence.

Creating trust requires communities to connect their marketing promises with the experience residents and families actually receive. "They focus on the full package of digital engagement, exceptional resident experiences, reputation management, operational excellence, and consultative sales into one cohesive brand experience," Fandel says. "Communities that consistently align marketing with resident experiences and empower every team member to serve as a brand ambassador will be best positioned to earn trust, strengthen occupancy, and build long-term loyalty in an increasingly competitive senior living market."