Adding Creativity to the Personalization Process during COVID-19

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country, now more than ever, senior living communities are forced to be creative in how their sales and marketing teams engage with their prospective residents. The focus here is on ways to keep resident personalizations moving forward.

Historically, the personalization process has been very high touch with most of the interaction done face-to-face. So, what do you do if you can't meet with your prospective residents face-to-face? This is exactly what we are seeing happen as leading senior living communities continue to work with their residents on selecting finishes for their new home. Two things that exist are great customer service and technology. Marrying these two can create an innovative approach to serving your residents during this unprecedented time.

What does that look like?

> "Oftentimes life's most challenging circumstances can create the most inspiring innovations."
>
> **Melissa King — Managing Partner BlueFingerprint**

Are you ready?

For the resident to continue to have an excellent experience they need to be comfortable with the technology they are being asked to use. Assume nothing here; this is a time to continue to build trust and walk them through the process, including the technology, so everyone is comfortable.

Step 1

Make sure you are comfortable with the technology and can teach others how to use it. Try to limit the meeting to 60 minutes; this will help keep the resident's attention. Preparation is the key to keeping the time limit. Scripting the meeting will help make it more efficient and provide the confidence you need to lead the meeting. **Click here to view a best practices blog** from Zoom, a leading provider of video conferencing.

Step 2

Have you clearly articulated the selections process you will follow? Although it's not an ideal situation, we want to maintain a level of excitement about their future home during a time of a pandemic. In addition to a clearly articulated process, follow the **BlueFingerprint® best practices** to ensure the resident is fully prepared.

> "We have a very experienced marketing team who has worked hard to sell out all units within the expansion. To continue our high level of touch, we're creating discovery boxes which contain samples organized by palettes/packages."
>
> **Ryan Knisely — Senior Manager**
> **Greystone Communities**

Step 3

It is important to "over communicate." When going through change people need to hear things multiple times to fully understand and internalize the change. A good rule is communicating 7 times. It seems like a lot, however there are many things going on and it is easy for people to tune some things out.

Now that you are proficient with the technology, you have a documented process and you are communicating well with the resident, **you are ready!**

BlueFingerprint® Best Practices

1. Have an initial phone call with the resident at least two weeks prior to the virtual meeting.
   - Walk through the virtual meeting process.
   - Train/educate on virtual meetings as needed.
   - Send a follow-up email with an electronic file of the amenities book; include a message to watch their mail for the Sample Kit.
2. Within 24 hours of the phone call, send sample kit to the resident w/trackable shipping service that can show delivery date, include:
   - Sample boards
   - Sanitizing wipes
   - List of decisions that need to be made
   - Prices
   - Return shipping for samples
3. 24 hours after the expected delivery of the Sample Kit, send an email follow-up.
   - Make sure they received the kit and provide time options for virtual meeting.
   - Invite questions and reiterate the decisions that need to be made.
4. Before the virtual meeting make sure to spend plenty of time preparing.
   - Be sure to script meeting beforehand.
   - Walk through different scenarios/role play.
   - Practice, practice and practice.
   - Review best practices.
   - Send reminder email to the resident with the link to join the virtual meeting.
   - Check computer connections and audio.
5. You are ready! Time to facilitate the meeting.
   - Build excitement and make sure the resident feels important.
   - Flexibility is key.
   - Record all personalization decisions.
   - Set up follow-up phone call if needed.