

HOW DINING FITS INTO THE SALES PROCESS



Senior Living Occupancy Is On The Rise But Traditional Selling Methods Are Less Effective.

Changing the Way We Sell to Seniors

According to quarterly data from [NIC MAP Vision](#), the average senior living occupancy grew 90 basis points to 81.4% in the second quarter of 2022. This represents the fourth consecutive quarter of census growth within the industry. This data indicates that the industry is poised for recovery.

In the post-covid recovery period, some senior living operators are recognizing the traditional selling methods of the past are becoming less effective. They've turned from traditional selling methods which focused primarily on their product (rooms and amenities) to a [prospect-centered selling](#) method. Under this method, sellers spend more time getting to know their prospects through home visits and creative follow-ups. Through this process, they learn more about their lives, their values, and what a typical day looks like them. The salesperson becomes an ally in their journey

to finding the right care; building trust through a relationship.

The goal of prospect-centered selling is to nurture the decision-making process before seniors are in the "ready-to-buy" stage. Why? Because many ready-to-buy prospects are typically in crisis, they need a place to live immediately. Focusing only on these seniors in crisis can reduce the sustainability of your community through:

- **Increased acuity in the community**
- **Increased referral fees and lead generation**
- **Increased operating costs**
- **Decreased community appeal to a discretionary buyer**



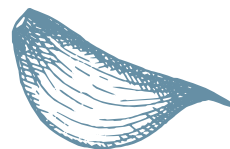
Selling to Their Stomachs

There's an old saying that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. If food is a primary concern for prospective residents, and it likely is, your dining program can be a wonderful partner for your sales team. If you're not already, start by offering prospects the opportunity to enjoy a meal during their visit to your community. During their meal, have the chef manager speak to them about menu options and different areas within the community. Not sure if dining in your community can be a positive selling point? Consider finding a dining services partner like Culinary Services Group to create an elevated dining experience that stands out in your community.

As a follow-up to their dining experience, consider partnering with your dining team to create a number of [meals to-go](#). Your community will be top of mind as prospects enjoy a tasty, hassle-free meal at home. It may serve as a reminder of why they began exploring senior living communities to begin with. Just make sure to work with your chef or chef manager to ensure the to-go meals are something that will still taste great when reheated. Consider offering some basic instructions to ensure the at-home product will be a positive experience.

On a broader level, you can market an outstanding meal experience by [becoming a caterer](#) in your community. Offer your services to senior centers, local churches, and event halls, or work with pharmaceutical reps to cater lunch-and-learns for doctors in your area. You'll not only create an additional revenue source for your community you'll be present in your prospective resident's advice network. When families are looking for senior housing they'll often get advice from doctors, church members, and community organizations. Your presence in the local community will help you to become a top choice.

Current residents are also great referrals. Consider opening bistros and dining rooms to provide guest pricing. It's another opportunity to increase revenue while giving prospects a true "taste" for the community. When family and friends visit relatives they can enjoy a meal and experience the different dining spaces and menus offered in the community.



CULINARY SERVICES GROUP



Catering to Different Demographics

Remember that most seniors aren't making their future housing decisions alone. Adult children are part of the decision-making process 73% of the time. Who's most likely going to be part of the decision-making process? Seventy-one percent of the time is an adult daughter. While she may not be the final decision-maker, she is certainly an influencer in the decision-making process, and she'll likely want to see a dining program that looks familiar to the world she lives in.

What does that look like in the scope of senior living? Dining spaces should feature the latest furniture, finishes, and hardware. There should be a variety of choices and venues for every meal. Perhaps a coffee bistro that serves casual breakfast and lunch; that also doubles as a place to host a cocktail hour with small plates in the evenings. It

looks like a dining room, or rooms, that offer made-to-order items like omelets for breakfast, and pasta and salads for lunches and dinners with a traditional menu and dining service as well.

Remember that the baby boomers and their children may have higher expectations when it comes to the food choices they expect in senior living communities too. They've grown accustomed to the farm-to-table movement that includes locally sourced meats, fruits, and vegetables. They will also expect accommodations for special diets, including vegetarian and vegan menu items. They don't want institutional, food they want to continue eating and dining the way they always have





We Can Help!

We hope we've convinced you that the food in your community food matters. Your dining program can be a valuable sales tool and calling card within your community. But what if your current dining program is less than noteworthy? Culinary Services Group can help you to create a dining program that will delight your residents and promote your community to the surrounding area.

We offer from-scratch cooking and menus tailored to the needs of your residents. We can help you to build a strategy that provides multiple dining areas and choices. A partnership with Culinary Services Group will help you to build your census today and grow your prospect-focused sales funnel for tomorrow.

[Contact Us Today!](#)

