



## Finding the Right Marketer – Part 2

In a previous issue of Dialogue+ we explored the type of person who makes for a good marketer. As a reminder, you're looking for someone who

- Is empathetic
- Has great presentation skills
- Is mature in attitude, professional in appearance and eloquent in speech
- Has tremendous curiosity – she wants to know every detail of each prospect's life (that's translates to great sales discovery)
- Excels at customer service (common courtesy and exceptional social manners included)
- Is detail oriented
- Is motivated by reaching a goal (she likes to win!)

It can be a difficult search because many of these attributes are not things that will show up on a resume. I find that it's best to go through resumes with a highlighter in hand. I highlight any interesting fact about a candidate that might relate to the role – things like having personal experience with retirement residences, experience in a business-to-consumer sales role, experience selling a high end product, volunteer roles related to seniors in some way. A combination of several of these things makes me really take notice. I find the

working of the cover letter to be important too. If the individual can write a warm, compelling letter chances are that they're likeable in person too. Remember – customers buy from people they like.

Once you've scheduled some interviews, it's time to develop your list of questions. A good blend of questions regarding sales skills, community outreach, market knowledge, personality and their response to various situations can give you a well-rounded look at the individual:

### General:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why does this position interest you?

### Sales Experience:

3. Tell me about any sales and marketing experience you have.
4. What are the differences you perceive between marketing and sales?
5. Describe a successful sales process.
6. Tell me about a time where you made a difficult sale

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**Community Outreach Experience:**

7. Describe a successful event that you organized and managed.
8. How did this event aid marketing?
9. What is your definition of community outreach? Describe any community outreach that you have organized and implemented.

**Market Knowledge:**

10. Tell me about any experience you have had dealing with seniors – either personally or professionally.
11. Do you have any knowledge – either professional or personal – of the seniors’ housing market? If so, tell me a little about the options available.
12. How does a retirement residence differ from a nursing home?

**Situational:**

13. What do you think would cause someone to begin looking for a retirement residence?
14. How do you think a senior who is considering a move to a retirement residence feels? What are his/her expectations and concerns?
15. What role do you think family play in helping someone choose a retirement residence?
16. Imagine you are looking for a retirement residence for someone.

What factors would be important to you in making your recommendation?

17. What key relationships do you think it would be necessary to forge in order to successfully do this job?
18. You have just been hired as Marketing Director at a residence where occupancy has dropped. What are the factors that you would look for to explain the decrease? What steps would you take to increase occupancy?
19. A prospective resident has toured your residence, is considering moving in, but has not given you commitment. How would you follow up with this person?

**Personality:**

20. Describe the type of supervisor with whom you work well.
21. Describe your management style.
22. Tell me about a time in your career when you managed a difficult task.
23. Tell me about the greatest lesson you have learned throughout your career.

**In Conclusion:**

24. Why do you want to leave your current job?
25. Do you have any questions you would like to ask?
26. Having discussed the nature of the position and asked us a few questions, are you still interested in this job? If so,

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why do you think you would be an asset to the residence?

One question that's not on the list is "are you good at building rapport?". We omit that one because it's usually evident in the first two minutes whether someone has a high "likeability" factor or not. If you're not a natural at rapport-building, then a sales role in this industry is not for you. There is an enormous trust factor needed to make this sale. The prospect feels extremely vulnerable at this point in his/her life and the family feels very guilty. It's important that they believe the marketer is acting in their best interest when he/she recommends a move to the residence. If the prospect and his/her family don't like and trust the marketer, it's game over before it's begun. In the interview if the candidate doesn't practically jump across the desk at you with enthusiasm and sincerity, you're interviewing the wrong person. There have been many interviews where I've been tempted to call it to a halt after five minutes and thank the person for their time. Poor rapport-building skills are that evident that quickly.

Once you've narrowed your list of candidates based upon their performance in the interviews, you may want to consider having your department heads meet those still under consideration. Sales is everyone's job in a residence so you need to know that the "newbie" will fit in with the group. Another interesting idea is to ask a resident or two to meet with the candidates. They know what they were looking for in someone to help them

make a move and they can probably give you a pretty darn idea whether you've found someone who will meet with the approval of others in their shoes.

When checking a candidate's references, in addition to all the regular queries, considering including questions like:

- How was her rapport-building?
- Was she good at discovery? How did she get all the information she needed to customize her presentation to a client?
- What were her closing ratios in her sales role?
- How was she at overcoming objections?
- How did she follow up with clients?

As the industry grows, we need to also grow our pool of qualified salespeople and this involves recruiting from other industries. Good sales skills are absolutely transferrable. I'd rather take someone with great sales skills but no industry experience or someone with industry experience but mediocre sales skills. Be prepared to invest some time in orientation but the results will pay off in improved occupancy.