



## Are you a Goldfish in the Marketing Tank? By Patti Hutton

As salespeople, sometimes we are like goldfish in a bowl — easily distracted by the newest, shiniest thing that grabs our attention. We can lose sight of our primary “meat and potato” activities that build relationships and make sales when the “latest and greatest” trinket flashes in our peripheral vision. We become enchanted with the shiny “new” program and convince ourselves that “new” ensures success, forgetting about the older, tried and true techniques that will get us to our goal.

### Here are two common scenarios I come across at retirement communities ...

The first is when the sales and marketing team is very excited about trying a new Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) software that offers such features as automated lead nurturing, also known as “drip marketing.” Basically, this is a series of automated, pre-written marketing emails that are sent out automatically on a schedule. The emails can even be based on triggers; for example, an action the person has performed such as signing up for an event at your community.

Sounds great, right? The problem occurs when we start believing the system that is supposed to make our lives easier will actually do our jobs for us. No matter how good your drip marketing campaign is, it will never replace an old-fashioned phone call to reach out and touch a prospect personally.

The second common scenario is when the sales and marketing team begins focusing too heavily on event planning. They are constantly looking for new and unique ideas and event topics to bring people on site with the hope that the event itself will make the sale.

While events can be a wonderful way to introduce people to your community, they should be used in conjunction with development of a personal relationship with a prospect. They should not replace the personal relationship entirely.

The tried and true sales strategies, while sometimes boring, still work. To follow are four things a salesperson still has to do no matter what CRM you are using or what events you are planning.

- Make personal follow-up phone calls on a consistent basis at appropriate intervals with every lead.
- Don't rely on an automated email response to an inquiry as your only follow-up. Make sure you contact the individual personally.
- Get out the stationery! An email is never a substitute for a handwritten note.
- Face-to-face meetings are the best way to build relationships. Don't neglect setting these up.

These four activities are not necessarily glamorous, and they do take time. What they are is effective. Don't be the goldfish, always distracted by the next best thing. Explore technology and new events as ways to complement — not replace — the tried and true. Remember, CRM's don't make sales, the sales person makes sales!



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