



Differentiate in Sales or Die

By Tina McCleod

If you are not memorable in your sales presentation then you might as well be invisible. Differentiating your sales presentations and the way you think about sales are key elements in your success. Prospects today have an endless number of choices among communities that are virtually identical. Short of slashing your prices and wrecking revenue, differentiating is the only way to gain sales and win.

Years ago, choice was not a problem. Our ancestors had only a few things in different categories from which to choose. When they wondered what was for dinner or where should they retire, the answer was not very complicated. What has so drastically changed in our industry over the years is a proliferation of options and the list keeps growing. Look no further than the multitude of stay-at-home programs popping up across the country today. For the consumer who is bombarded with various options, what is the unique selling proposition of your community and how does your staff relay that information so that the choice becomes much easier and compelling for a prospect to make?

In 1960, an advertising agency chairman named Rosser Reeves was known as the high priest of the hard sell. He wrote a very interesting book titled *Reality in Advertising*. His book was translated into 28 languages and was widely used as a college textbook. In many ways, it was the beginning of modern day marketing. In his book he introduced a concept called the Unique Selling Proposition (USP), which we still use today.

When Rosser was talking about being different, the world was a much easier place. The competition that we face today did not exist back then. In fact, by today's standards, real competition barely existed at all.

The concept of being unique or different is far more important in the year of 2015 than it was in 1960. So what is the short answer? Find your difference. Every community has essentially the same value propositions of continuing care, but there is at least one unique difference and perhaps that difference is you! Make your sales presentation unique and memorable. Be a good listener; ask thoughtful and meaningful questions. Your community has at least one differentiating factor so make sure to talk about it, whether it's a unique dining program or an outstanding wellness program -- remember your difference.



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Once you've established what makes you different, your next assignment is to reflect that difference in everything you do. The community's single-mindedness will influence not only your prospects but your employees as well.

Consistency comes in many forms. One form of consistency is your message. Often communities develop a simple but effective differentiating message that is communicated in every sales presentation and in every advertising message. Consistency is key. Make certain that whatever your difference, it is held to the highest standards. Always remember that in today's world it's all about choice. Your job is to make your community the only choice for your prospects!



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