

Differentiate in Sales or Die

By Tina McCleod

If you are not memorable in a sales presentation then you might as well be invisible. Differentiating your sales presentations and the way you think about sales is a key element 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.

In the beginning choice was not a problem. Our early ancestors had a few things in different categories from which to choose. When they wondered what is for dinner or where I should retire, the answer was not very complicated. What has so drastically changed in our industry over the last decade is a proliferation of options and we keep adding to the list. Look no further than the multitude of stay at home programs popping up across the country. So for the consumer who is bombarded with varying options, what is the unique selling proposition of our communities and how does our staff relay that information so that the choice becomes much easier and compelling to make.

In 1960, an advertising agency chairman named Rosser Reeves was known as the high priest of 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 for short, which we still use today.

When Rosser was talking about being different, the world was an easy place. The competition that we face today didn't exist. In fact, by today's standards, real competition barely existed.

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 maybe that difference is you! Make your sales presentation unique and memorable. Be a good listener and ask thoughtful and meaningful questions. Your community has at least one differentiating

factor too. Make sure to talk about that whether it is a unique dining program or an outstanding wellness program and remember your difference.

Once you've established what makes you different, your next assignment is to reflect that difference in everything you do. This single-mindedness will influence not only your prospects but 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. Make sure that whatever your difference, it is done to the highest standards. Always remember that in today's world it is about choice. Your job is to make your community the only choice for your prospects.