

17 Senior Living Recruiting Tips for 2017

**Independent Living • Assisted Living • Senior Housing
CCRC • Life Care Communities • Memory Care**



LM HURLEY & ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING & CONSULTING

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Have a Well Defined **Recruitment Process in Place**

Whether you are hiring a Caregiver, a Nurse, a Marketing Director, an Executive Director, or a higher level senior living executive, always prepare in advance and follow the basic steps below.

1. Decide who will interview the candidates and make sure they have been trained on interviewing techniques. Interviewing multiple candidates for various positions is a learned skill.
2. Prepare written interview questions in advance. Each interviewer can ask some impromptu questions but they must ask the same basic list of questions so that you can compare answers and more accurately to evaluate the candidates more equally.
3. Take notes so that you won't forget what they said. You can easily forget what the first interviewee said or mix his/her responses with subsequent interviewees. Stay organized and staple your notes to their resume for debriefing with your team later.

2

Get on Board with a **Marketing Approach to Recruiting**

The numbers don't lie: HR professionals think recruiting is becoming more like marketing (86% think so, to be exact).

Companies that successfully compete for top talent in 2017 will need to adopt marketing tactics to attract the right candidates. Things like employer branding, proactive engagement with passive candidates, and email marketing campaigns are just some of the tactics we can borrow from marketing.

Think of recruiting the same way your community Marketing Directors do. Put the candidate at ease, make some small first. Ask them about the best moment they have ever had at work. Then find out why they are interested in the position. Go into "discovery" and learn why they left or want to leave their current/last position. Start asking your prepared list of "behavioral interview" questions and keep the interview on track.

If they seem like a good fit sell them on your company and then let them ask questions.

3

Utilize Referrals From Employees and Families

This one is a big one that sometimes people don't think about. Referrals can be a huge boost to your company, so it's a good idea to have a referral program in place, where you ask your candidates and current employees for referrals, and have some kind of reward or bonus in place for them. This can grow your organization, and also keep your employees motivated.

Over two-thirds of senior living employers currently have a documented referral process in place.

On average, 24% of new hires originate from a referral, but some companies see rates at nearly 40%.

The majority of employers find that referred employees outperform other employees on most aspects of overall company fit.

4

Always Treat Your Candidates Like Your Customers

Today's candidates continue to expect a personal, prompt, and professional experience, just like your customers do. That's why not responding to candidates at every stage of the recruitment process is problematic. Slighted applicants are less likely to apply again, or may even express ill will, hurting your company reputation.

Make the candidates feel comfortable.

They reveal more if they aren't on guard.

If you make the interview feel like an interrogation you'll know how they respond to questioning under pressure but it's unlikely they'll tell you anything revealing about themselves because they will be on the defensive.

According to Career Builder, candidates say only 40% of applications receive a response and only 14% of applicants feel a company has been responsive

5

Create a Painless Process for Applying

Think of your current recruitment process through the eyes of the candidate.

Is your process difficult? Complicated? Nerve-racking?

Your recruiting/hiring process is a reflection of your company. Make sure it shows that you're sensitive to candidates' needs

People don't want to spend a lot of time filling out an application or answering several questions. Have a simple way for them to submit their resume and fill out their basic information. You can get the rest of the detailed information later on in the process.

If your executive level candidates are forced to fill out several pages of information or spend an hour cutting and pasting years of experience and salary history into a web form, there's a good chance you'll lose them before they complete the application and attach their resume.

If applying for your jobs is complicated or cumbersome, your best candidates may just give up and go elsewhere.

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Make Sure Your Career Site is **Mobile-friendly**

According to a 2015 Pew Research survey, nearly 30% of American adults have used their smartphone in some way for their job search, including browsing job listings.

94 % of smartphone job seekers report:

Filling out online job applications 50%

Creating a resume or cover letter 23%

Candidates of all generations are using mobile devices for job hunting because it's convenient.

Millennials are most likely to do so, but almost 50 % of baby boomers are using mobile devices for searches.

Make sure that your website, your job ads, and your job postings are all mobile-friendly.

Smartphone job seekers encounter a range of problems navigating online employment resources.

Keep it simple and collect the nitty gritty data later if you are interested in moving the candidate forward.

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Embrace Digital Trends and Social Media

Remember that senior living recruiters are in a competition for the best employees. As a successful hiring manager, you must learn how to attract employees. Master social media or have a marketing department that can assist in this ever growing resource.



Take advantage of social platforms where job seekers already spend most of their time. LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are great tools to leverage when sourcing for candidates.

If your company already operates a Facebook page, don't forget to post job openings there! Even if your fans don't identify with the position, providing a link will encourage them to share the job with someone who they know who may be a better fit.

The average American spends 87 hours per month browsing on their smartphone.

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Do Your Due Diligence and Check social media profiles

Like all senior living employers, you'll need to do a background check. But don't underestimate a quick Google search, on the candidate's name, to see what comes up about that person online. But if you're not looking through the candidate's social media profiles, you could be missing a key way to find out more about the individual as a person and an employee — for better or for worse.

While it's legally risky to allow a candidate's social media activity to factor into your hiring decisions, it can give you a better picture of someone you're interested in hiring. In another Business News Daily article, Aliah Wright, a manager with the Society For Human Resource Management, said that social media can be used as a skills assessment, especially if a candidate has professional blog posts or portfolio work.



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Is a Candidate Exaggerating? **Try Silence...**

And when you sense a candidate might be fibbing, the question is; what do you say or do to find out. The answer? Nothing - the most effective thing you can do is nothing at all. Silence, one of the most challenging things for interviewers to master, and it is also one of the most important skills an interviewer can have.

Stretching out the silence for 3 seconds, or even 6 seconds, may not sound like a lot of time, but it's going to feel like an eternity to your candidate who is in the hot seat. It actually takes some practice to slowly count to three; you're going to feel a pretty strong urge to speak, but don't do it, just guide yourself through that slow count of three. The silence will make the candidate feel so uncomfortable that they will start to talk again. And that's the key here, to get more and more information so you can make informed hiring decisions.

The persuasive power of silence is frequently unused and underestimated.

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Use Validated Pre-employment Assessment Tools

Assessment instruments have come a long way in the last 20 years. Used appropriately and with the proper training, assessment instruments designed for selection can help you pick top talent well matched to your company.

Pre-employment tests, validated specifically for your organization can also be developed. These types of instruments can help you clearly target the critical characteristics and traits necessary for success in your organization, helping you hire candidates who will perform at a high level.

At the same time, beware of placing too much stock in these assessments.

A well known senior living organization, who hired us to identify a new president, contracted with a highly paid senior living management consultant to assist with restructuring.

We discussed the use of assessment tools as part of the process and he said he did not like them because *“There are a lot of smart rats out there!”*.

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Know Your Competition and **Keep an Eye on the Market**

Know what your competitors are doing and how you can differentiate yourself from the market. This one is important, because standing out from everybody else is essential if you want to recruit top talent. Pinpoint the area where you are the strongest, or stronger than everybody else, and focus on that.

We recommend creating email alerts on various job posting sites so you can keep an eye on the assisted living job market in your area. Doing this will tell you who is hiring for which positions at what communities, regions, or corporate offices so you can better position yourself to compete for candidates.

This technique is valuable for C-Level, VP, and Regional positions as well as community level management such as Executive Directors, Sales and Marketing Directors.



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Know Your Reputation and **Keep an Eye on your Reviews**

Potential employees often seek insider information about companies they want to work for, and this includes salary estimates, interview tips and reviews from current and former employees from sites such as Glassdoor.

According to Glassdoor, 46 percent of its members read company reviews before they even speak to a recruiter or hiring manager.

Top candidates may not even apply in the first place if they don't like what they see: 69 % of job seekers said they would not take a job with a company that had a bad reputation, even if they were currently unemployed.

On the flip side, 94 % of respondents said they're likely to apply for a job if the employer actively manages the employer brand by responding to reviews

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You Must Sell the Candidate on the Job and Company

You need to ask your prepared interview questions and discover the motivations behind every candidate. Find out what you need to know then let them tell their story.

And then if you think they may be a good fit, then you need to sell them on the opportunity and the company, but don't talk more than 20% of the time.

For example, if your company is struggling, don't gloss it over. There really are people who would prefer to take on that type of challenge than to work for a mature predictable company.

Match the person with the right job by telling the truth about the opportunity, and the company.

Don't over inflate the company or oversell the opportunity - truth in packaging!

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Understand your Culture and **Develop a Brand Script**

A brand script is a concise description of your culture and employer brand. Communicate this to all of your managers and line staff. This allows everyone to share the same vision and to communicate a consistent brand message.

Branding and culture is about more than logos, brochures, websites and lofty mission statements. Lets face it – every senior living organization has a great mission statement and other advertised core values or principals of service to support their vision and values. These are all great things to say but the key is in doing them.

From the moment a prospective resident, family member, or candidate walks through the door, the entire staff needs to deliver on these promises. What people see, hear, smell, and taste tells people who you are.

In order for a brand to be meaningful, the entire team needs to understand it and execute it in their actions at every level of the community and organization.

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Don't Ask "Yes" or "No" Questions **Utilize Open-ended Questions**

Behavioral interviewing strategies utilize open-ended questions that are designed to elicit a more detailed response from the candidate than a traditional interview question would. We all know this is the case but based on our experience debriefing candidates from interviews it happens less than you would expect.

Behavioral interviewing is the most accurate predictor of future performance. Studies show that behavioral interviewing is 55 % predictive of future on-the-job behavior, while traditional interviewing is only 10 % predictive.

Predicting fit within specific communities and environments is critical. Is your community a start-up? Stable? Or is it distressed with numerous challenges ranging from low census to poor resident care and cultural break-down?

Behavioral interviewing produces detailed answers derived from experiences that can be very accurate predictors of future job performance and help guide your hiring.

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Always Allow Enough Time for Candidates to Ask Questions

The number and caliber of their questions will tell you a lot about how they think. Strong candidates will do their homework on your company and should come prepared with a number of questions regarding the position and the company.

Why is the position open? How will you measure my success? What are the top five challenges that need to be addressed in the first 30 – 90 days? What kind of training and development does the company offer? What was the last person who held this position really great at? What were they missing?

They should be asking some questions that demonstrate that they have done their homework on your company but are seeking more details.

Candidates should be asking questions about the position they are applying for – not about their next raise, promotion or step up in the organization.

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Know and Understand Your **Negotiation Terms and Limits**

Be mindful of what you can offer when you negotiate with a candidate (time off, signing bonus, perks, salary, benefits, flexibility). This will help shorten the recruiting cycle, and it also gives the candidate peace of mind sooner, since they won't have to wait as long for an answer.

You probably won't start with the top figure you have budgeted for the position, but you need to know how high you can go for a candidate who can do the job plus more.

You also need to be conscious about offers that are below the market rate because it makes it much easier for your competitor to recruit your top talent away from you.

Assisted living CEOs/presidents saw a 2.19% salary increase from 2015 to 2016, and assisted living administrators saw a 2.25% increase in that time, according to the 19th annual "Assisted Living Salary & Benefits Report," released Jan. 23 by Hospital & Healthcare Compensation Service.

**Most of the top talent are not looking for a new job.
They are below the surface and must be discovered.**

