



Integrating Sales and Marketing to Drive Presales in a Difficult Economy

*Edgewood Retirement Community
North Andover, Massachusetts*

The Situation Edgewood is a continuing care retirement community in North Andover, Massachusetts, about 40 minutes north of Boston. Opened in 1997 and managed by Life Care Services, Edgewood has 219 apartments and a strong history of providing high quality care and services to its residents.



Edgewood's board developed a strategic plan to expand several of its services and amenities, including the plan's centerpiece that would make development of the rest of the items possible: the addition of 22 cottages (a new product for Edgewood) and two apartments inspired by an old milk barn on the property. With an average entrance fee of \$600,000 (Edgewood offers a 90% refundable lifecare contract) and average monthly fees over \$4,500, selling these cottages required developing a new market, one that was younger and more affluent than Edgewood's current resident base.

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The campaign's priority deposit phase started smoothly in early spring of 2008. However, after converting only seven of the 28 priority depositors to 10% deposits in late June and early July—10 short of the 17 needed to be financed—the presales program completely stalled at 29%. The reason? Prospects expressed reluctance to make a decision given the difficult real estate market.

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Experience. Passion. Results.

Our Approach:

Integrating Sales with Marketing

When we began working with Edgewood in early 2008, Love & Company’s primary roles were to update the community’s brand and generate the leads needed to drive cottage presales, while also ensuring that leads for Edgewood’s existing apartments stayed strong. Sales were to be handled by the community’s experienced director of marketing.

From a branding perspective, we repositioned Edgewood to more clearly leverage the community’s unique strengths: its scenic, pastoral setting, blended with its proximity to the wealth of cultural opportunities in North Andover and nearby Boston. The advertising and collateral materials were built on a new positioning platform, “Surrounded by beauty. Connected to the world.”

We launched the priority deposit phase of the presales program in March with a heavy concentration of lead generation efforts, including direct mail, advertising and public relations. Over a three-month period, the marketing program generated more than 300 leads and grew the priority list to 28 members, with 17 sales needed to achieve financing.

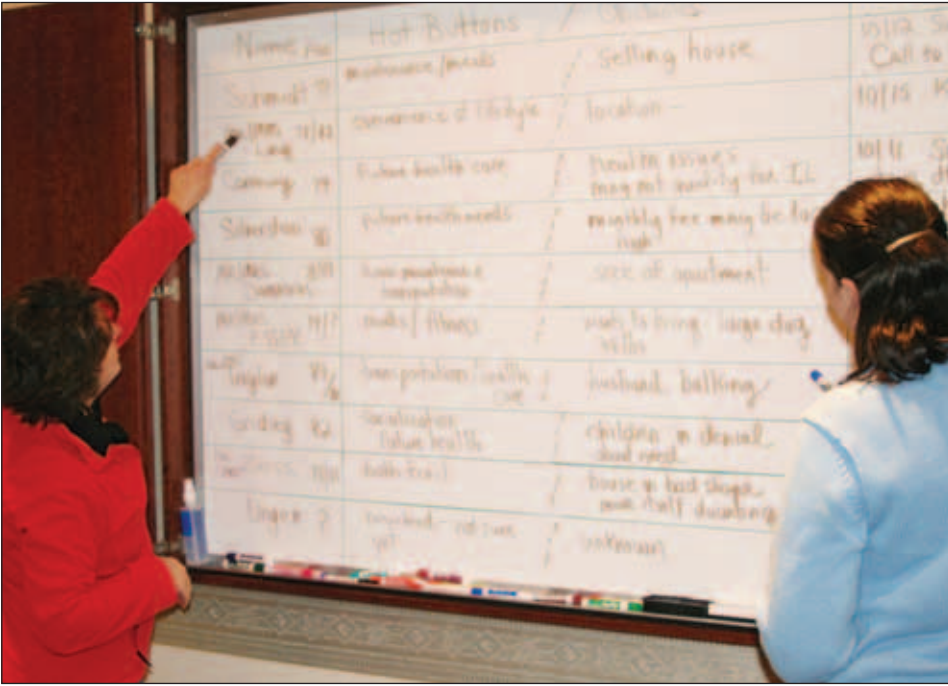
Unfortunately, only a few weeks after starting the 10% deposit process in late June, it became apparent that Edgewood had a problem. Only seven of the 28 priority list members converted to 10% deposits, and by mid-July presales had dried up. In addition, attrition in the existing apartments was at an all-time high, since many of the original residents were now moving to higher levels of care.



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Adding the Sales Side

With sales stalling, Edgewood turned to Love & Company early in July for assistance. After conducting a quick but comprehensive analysis of Edgewood’s sales systems, we concluded that, while Edgewood’s sales team had significant experience in CCRC sales, the economic environment required a much more intensive



Fictional names used for privacy.

Working closely with Edgewood's executive management, we directed the implementation of an enhanced sales system, including a daily "hot board" designed to facilitate the sales process with the hottest leads.

Reinforcing Success

For 2009, Edgewood had a goal of seven cottage sales for the entire year, and to begin cottage move-ins by August. However, the sagging economy's impact created higher than average cancellations. We answered the challenge by continuing the enhanced sales strategies—including: facilitating the sales process with the hottest leads through Love & Company's daily "hot board" system; maintaining a systemized approach to reconnecting with past leads through daily goals for connected call outs and scheduled appointments; working closely with the sales team to strategize and follow through on unique sales approaches for each hot lead; and devising new prospect incentives to create sales urgency as well as enhanced compensation incentives for the sales team.

In support of the sales team's lead base "data mining" activities and to generate new inquiries, we developed and

approach to sales. We identified several areas where we could build on the team's experience, and, working in close partnership with Edgewood's executive management, by August we had implemented our sales systems and were managing the sales process.

We focused first on generating sales from existing leads, then supplemented the sales effort with a "blitz" marketing campaign designed to aggressively generate new leads in September and early October. Within a two-month window—a period that included the fateful events of September 2008—we generated the 10 remaining presales, successfully achieving the 70% presales target by mid-October.

During this same period, Love & Company also helped generate 10 sales of Edgewood's existing apartments, returning the community to 96% occupancy despite its highest historical turnover rate.

SENIOR LIVING

The door to an even more **secure future** is now open.



Come see our new model home!

Join us for an Open House reception and tour.

Select a date convenient for you.
June 22, June 24
or June 26
from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

To RSVP, please call 866-851-1473.

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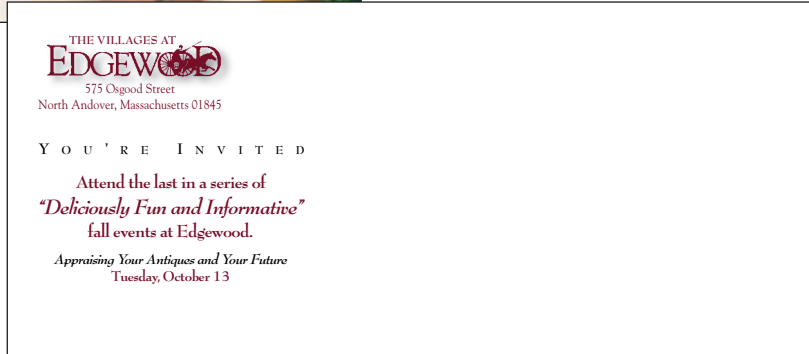
To learn more, attend an upcoming Open House Event!

We developed and launched a series of marketing tactics—including a model home sneak preview event and open house.



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launched a series of marketing tactics—including incentive letters to the lead base, a model home sneak preview event and open house invitations, and direct mail for a series of “deliciously fun and informative” events in the fall—generating over 375 new and re-inquiries.



Through the end of September, Love & Company helped produce ten cottage sales, keeping Edgewood at 70% despite the continued economic challenges. During the same time period, we helped Edgewood sell 28 existing apartments—more than they sold in all of 2008—keeping them at 96% census.

70% cottage presales
96% apartment census

Email us at tbracken@loveandcompany.com.

**Or, call Tim Bracken
at 301-663-1239.**

Lesson Learned Combining the full range of resources—marketing, creative, lead generation and sales—produces results, even in today’s economy.

What This Means For You Are you having census challenges or is your expansion struggling? Do your sales people have the tools and training to make the most of your leads in this tough selling environment?

Love & Company is successful in developing and executing a marketing program and sales system that work. We’re getting prospects in front of sales teams, and doing it cost-effectively. And, we’re having success upgrading and updating the skills of sales teams, as they struggle to keep pace with today’s far more challenging sales environment.

Please contact Love & Company if your marketing results need a boost. We’re generating success for our clients, even in today’s economy. We can for you, too.

*Additional case studies
can be found on the
Love & Company website.*



Experience. Passion. Results.

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