SENIOR LIVING

5 SEO
Strategies
2023

5 expert recommendations to help jumpstart your SEO this year. Brought to you by:

FURTHER

A CONVERSATIONAL AI COMPANY
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EXPERT INSIGHTS
PROVIDED BY:

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CO-FOUNDER & CPO
FURTHER

"FURTHER sits at the intersection of sales and marketing in a very unique way which allows us to provide impactful insights."

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Senior Living Sales and Marketing has changed dramatically over the past several years.

Our industry has made significant progress adopting new technologies to better serve seniors and their families, but this has created some new challenges. **How do senior living operators know if they are keeping up with the industry best practices, when those standards have changed so much?**

Figuring out what **works and what doesn't is a constant challenge**, and it is very hard to evaluate a single tool in a complex sales and marketing funnel. To help you make better decisions in 2023, the FURTHER team took a look at all the data we could get our hands on to identify the best practices for senior living sales and marketing.

1
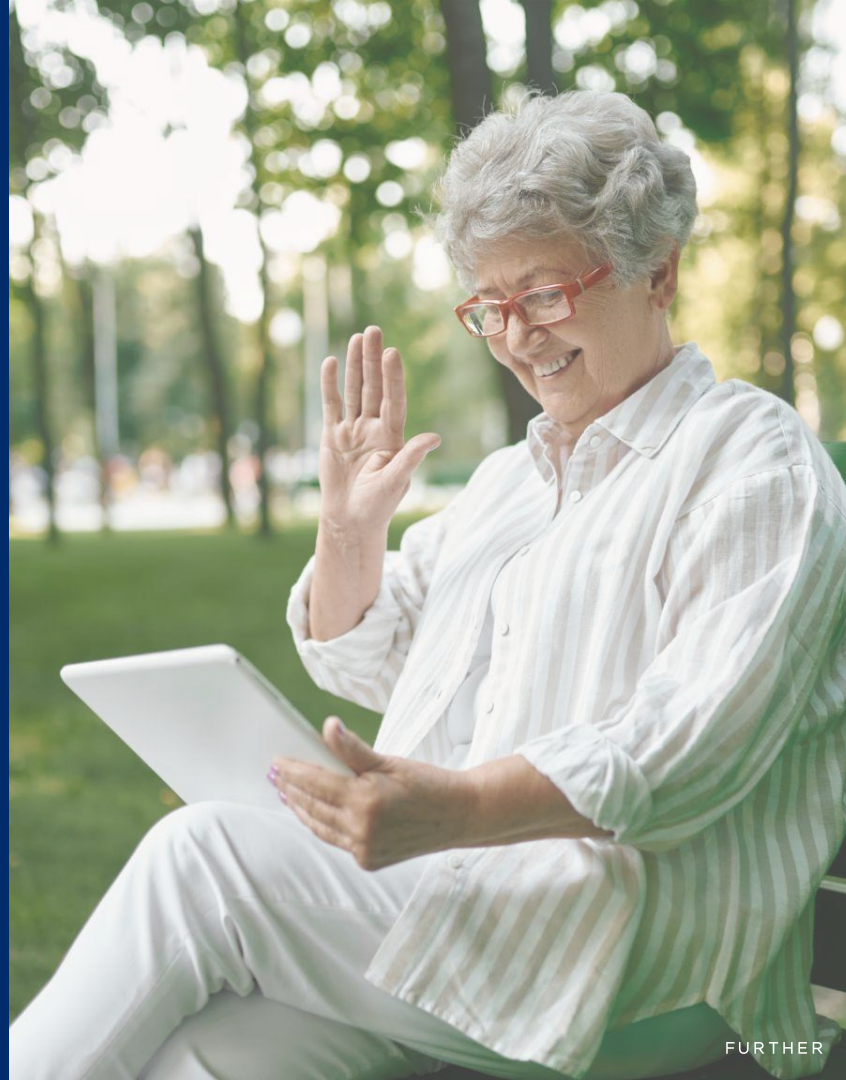
Further sits at the intersection of sales and marketing in a very unique way.

On one side, we see all of the marketing data associated with lead generation (eg. did the lead come from Google Ads?), but we also have a huge amount of sales data through the conversations we are having with prospects

For example, we know that someone who clicks "Out Of My Budget" after viewing pricing is 12 times less likely to move in compared to someone who schedules a tour.

By sitting in between these two functions, **we have been able to better understand which marketing efforts actually work.** We also have been able to identify sales processes and systems that demonstrably *increase occupancy.*

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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Search Engine Optimization relates directly to organic (not paid) traffic you receive from search engines. In practice, this means users who visit your website and are referred via Google.

For the purposes of these recommendations, there are two kinds of traffic that you receive from Google:

Branded Search Traffic
These are users who type in your community name on Google (eg. Brookdale Paramus) and come to your website.

Generic Traffic
These are users who are searching for a generic query, such as "assisted living near me" and then navigate to your website via Google Maps, or your website directly.

We will cover solutions below that will help you improve both kinds of rankings (generic traffic will drive more branded traffic for example), but primarily we will be focused on improving traffic for Generic search queries.

CONTENT STRATEGY

Keyword Goals

For any individual senior living community, setting clear goals for your organic rankings make the rest of your SEO strategy much simpler to implement. The best performing senior living organizations organize around two primary topics:

- The services they provide
- The physical location of the building

In addition to goals around content topics, you also should have a goal around content length. An easy win is to create much more content than your competitors, with greater breadth. Most senior living organizations have less than 500 words of copy on their websites, we recommend 5-10x this amount. Some tactical ideas for optimizing content around the two ranking goals include:

- Care/Services: Include definitions of care and clearly explain services provided
- Care/Services: Include relevant terms (ADLs, Medication Management, etc.)
- Location: Mention and link to nearby local businesses, services and attractions

It sounds obvious, but in practice is quite simple: you want your page to provide exhaustive detail on the services you provide, in the location you provide them.

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CONTENT STRATEGY

Content Topic Authority

A rising tide raises all boats, and this is certainly true when it comes to organic rankings. If you do a great job optimizing your local community pages, then the next step is to improve your overall authority on the primary topics you are attempting to rank for. One way to do this is to look for others who are ranking for topics you would like to rank for.

- One quick call out. When you are doing searches like this on Google, do it via an incognito window, so the results are not personalized. For the purposes of this exercise, ignore local results (eg. 10 communities near you), we are looking for the content that ranks highest purely for being great content.
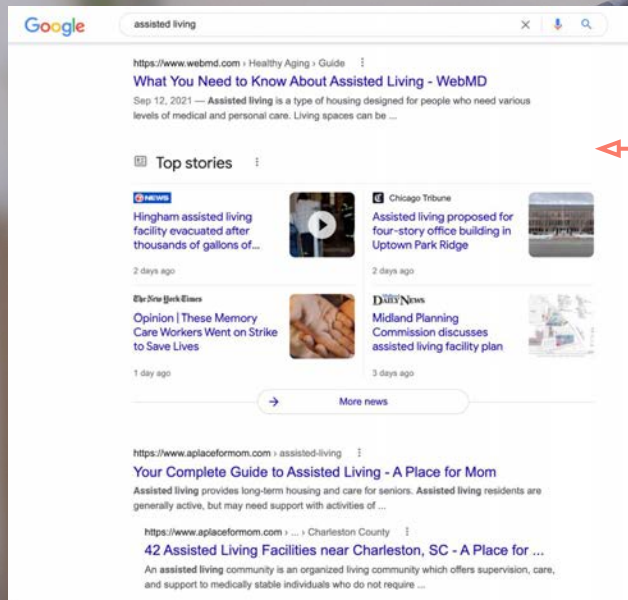
Let's try this for "assisted living" (but this can work for any search term)

The first result here is a webmd result. When looking at the article, there are several topics that would be great to cover in detail on your website if you want to be an authority on "assisted living". Some examples include:
- Personal Care
- Medication Management
- ADLs
- Licenses, Insurance, Visitation Policy
- And more...

The better job your domain does providing broad coverage related to your topic, the more credibility you have for local generic queries

CONTENT STRATEGY

Content Creation Resources

If your agency doesn't have content creation services, or they are too expensive, you can always try finding a writer via upwork.com or other similar sites.

Once you have your list of topics, creating a content brief template is a great next step to get your content creation process started

DID YOU KNOW:

FURTHER will partner with your digital marketing agencies to ensure you have the best team working for you. Together, we'll leverage best practices and leading insights to help you convert more traffic to move-ins.

Learn more about who we work with at www.talkfurther.com/integrations

COMMUNITY ON PAGE OPTIMIZATIONS
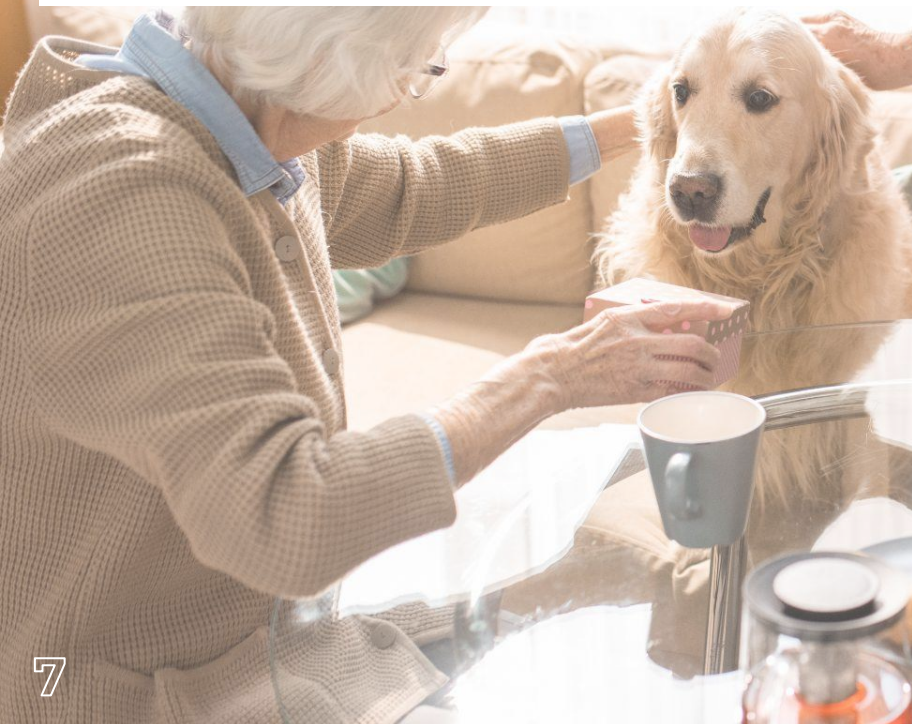
Domain

Keep your communities on one domain even if they do not share a single brand. You will struggle to get 20 single domains to compete with a single domain, and it makes the cost of content creation several times more expensive when considering topic authority.

We have watched from the sideline for a few clients switching from multiple domains to a single domain with very positive results.

Something to think about...

After you work hard to optimize search, driving more traffic to your community web pages... your next step should be to optimize how you better engage all these visitors.

This is what FURTHER does best.

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COMMUNITY ON PAGE OPTIMIZATIONS

Title Tags

The Title tag you select for your community will inform the rest of your strategy in terms of what search terms you are trying to rank for. Generally speaking best practices are to stay within the 50-60 character limit google requires, and to include the most important keywords. An example might be:

SL Brand Paramus, NJ | Assisted Living & Memory Care

One thing to keep in mind when matching your keywords to your community, the higher the acuity, the more expensive the traffic. Personally, I would recommend optimizing for the highest levels of care you offer in the community, even if "senior living" is a more appropriate description of the services you offer.

☐ senior living	33,100		0%	+22%	Low	—	$2.74	$10.31
☐ assisted living	110,000		0%	0%	Low	< 1%	$4.00	$15.52
☐ memory care	14,800		+50%	+83%	Low	—	$6.14	$23.25

Hack Idea: Brain Deen has one of, if not the best SEO blogs on the web. Quite a few ideas in this post are from there directly. One idea he has for Title tags is called "Cliff Hangers". I could see that working quite well in Senior Living also.

COMMUNITY ON PAGE OPTIMIZATIONS

H1 Tag

While Google now states that more than a single h1 should not hurt your rankings, it remains best practice to use the H1 as the primary header, and include the name of your community. Your H1 should match closely to the Title Tag, but you can include more keywords, such as care and location, as there is no limit on length.

H2 Tag

You should have several h2 tags that are optimized for both the care types you offer and your location. For example "senior living", "retirement living" and "independent living" all describe similar services, but each could be used alternatively in h2 tags. Variations on the location are also important, for example you may want to include both the county name, or neighborhood in addition to the city your community is located in. Some examples for a Memory Care Community in New York City might be:

- Memory Care New York City
- Safe & Secure Dementia Care in New York City
- Short Term Memory Care Stays
- Alzheimer's Care Midtown

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COMMUNITY ON PAGE OPTIMIZATIONS

H3 Tag

H3 tags can be used to better match your page to user searches. Many users are not just looking for "assisted living near me", they have very specific queries. Eg. "assisted living costs near me". The more unique and specific your content, the more rankings you can potentially rank for. We will go into more detail around content opportunities below, but headers can help you organize your page and prioritize your content. Some examples of h3 tags you should think about including are related to dining, activities, services, amenities, FAQ's and cost.

Even if you don't display pricing on your website, it makes sense to include something Google can easily return to answer the users questions. If you don't someone else likely will!

Try it with your own website, but take a look at this example

COMMUNITY ON PAGE OPTIMIZATIONS

Meta Description Tag

The Meta Description tag seem to become less important every year with Google now stating to rewrite them in 70% of searches.

TAKE A TEST DRIVE

Curious what FURTHER does? Want to see it in action? You can try our demo at:

www.talkfurther.com/try-it

Interested in a custom demo? Let us know and we'll build you one at no charge.

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PAGE SPEED

Page Speed Evaluation

The speed of your site is one of the easiest things to evaluate, but exceptionally difficult to fully optimize. To start, you can test out the speed of your website here: **https://pagespeed.web.dev/**
You don't need to be perfect, just better than the competition. Compare yourself to some of your local competition to get a sense for where you stack up.

Page Speed Easy Wins

There are few simple things you can do to speed up your website:
- Set up a full page caching service using AWS Cloudfront or Cloudflare
  - Cloudflare comes with additional services that allow you automatically speed up your website
- Use preconnect and dns-pretch for third party scripts
- Lazy load images

TECHNICAL OPTIMIZATIONS

Schema Markup

Schema Markup is one of the easiest, quickest wins you can implement to better explain who you are to Google in a structured way. There is an in-depth guide here, but some examples of things to include:

- Name
- Address
- URL
- Phone
- Lat/Lng
- Area Served
- Images
- Opening Hours
- Logo
- Reviews

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TECHNICAL OPTIMIZATIONS

NAP | Name, Address, Phone

Citation management is one of the more annoying, but extremely important aspects of local SEO. Ensuring that your local business name is an exact match on your website, Google My Business Listing, Facebook Page, Yelp Listing, etc. is an important ranking factor. As much as is possible, keep the Name, Address and Phone *exactly* the same. There are some fairly inexpensive services that can help with this, in addition to companies like reputation.com that offer this as part of a larger subscription.

TECHNICAL OPTIMIZATIONS

Internal Linking

While Google recommends against abusing link schemes, ensuring your internal linking structure includes the keywords you want to rank for can help crawlers better understand your service offering. A simple way to implement this is to use breadcrumbs. An example of how you might structure breadcrumbs is below:

Assisted Living > Assisted Living Michigan > Assisted Living in Jenison > American House Jenison

5 Trends eBook
CLICK TO READ

TECHNICAL OPTIMIZATIONS

Ranking factors analyzed

FAQ Schema Markup

You should add Frequently Asked Questions to your website, and mark them up using structured data to ensure that Google can include them rich results. There are a couple of added benefits in addition to rich results for adding FAQs. The primary benefit is providing comprehensive answers to your users, which make them less likely to return to the search results and look for another website to get their answer. The secondary benefit is to help with bounce rate and dwell time, two important rankings for Google Rank Brain. Higher click through rates, better matching to search intent and longer dwell times is a solid strategy for improving rankings.

Take a look at the screenshot below from this SEMRush study on important ranking factors, time on site is the second most important factor for rankings.

TECHNICAL OPTIMIZATIONS

Embed Google Map on Website

This is a slightly contested topic, but erring on the side of the User Experience, you should probably include an embedded Google Maps on your community page. You can click here to read more about the history of this topic.

### GET TO KNOW OUR SOLUTIONS

Virtual Sales Assistant — Engage + qualify web visitors

Conversational Webforms — Capture, qualify, and schedule more tours

Messaging Assistant — Offline conversations + nurturing

Insights Dashboard — Consolidated info to make better decisions

Pricing Assistant — Single source of truth

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GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

25.12%
GOOGLE MY BUSINESS
SIGNALS

2.82%
SOCIAL SIGNALS

5.88%
PERSONALIZATION

9.56%
BEHAVIORAL
SIGNALS

10.82%
CITATION SIGNALS

16.53%
LINK SIGNALS

13.82%
ON-PAGE SIGNALS

15.44%
REVIEW SIGNALS

GMB | Google My Business

When it comes to local SEO, Google My Business reigns supreme. Check out the graphic to the left from Backlinko.
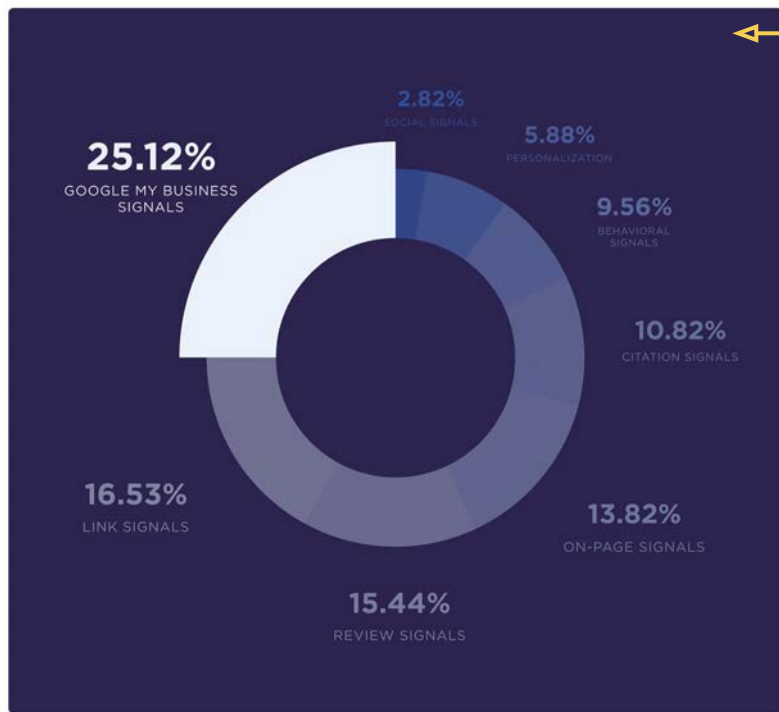
Google is incentivized to host more of your content, so they can sell more ads to users searching for your business. As such, they reward profiles with more complete information and regular content on their GMB profile. Most senior living organizations have claimed their community listing on GMB, so it's mostly optimization that is left. This means adding in services, hours, categories, photos, virtual tours. You can get more details from this post.

- Are Posts on GMB worth it? That is something that interested us, we will be taking a look at this data in the future to see what kind of results you can expect from this investment

Want more insights like this?

Connect with us today about how we can improve
your digital sales experience and help your teams
have their best year yet.

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