

Putting it All Together, AARC Conference Wrap Up

Jeff Fleming, AARC Board of Directors

We concluded another great conference, immersing ourselves with motivation, metrics, and momentum as we head into the roaring (20)20's. The setting was the beautifully-remodeled 1920's Read House in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Attendees from 13 states and the District of Columbia gathered to R&D (ripoff & duplicate) techniques that work. There were 21 first time attendees who discovered the value of recruiting the lucrative retiree market to their communities.

Wednesday

How to Win More Sales Through All Seasons

Presenter: Jason Forrest and Mary Marshall, Forrest Performance Group

- Don't underestimate the consumer's willingness to spend money – nobody wants long-butt jeans
- Look for the frowny-faced older folks, they're not the life of the party, but they have disposable income 😊
- Be confident, don't be needy...it doesn't work in dating and it doesn't work in sales

Rethink, Retool and Refine – A Case Study

Presenter: Jane O'Connor, 55 Plus

- What is your USP? Unique Selling Position – attributes of your product or service that are unique to your brand and provide a benefit for the customer that is different or better than the competition

Immersive Technology Is Changing The Buyer & Traveler Journey, Are You Ready?

Presenter: Ty Downing, SkyNav

- The attention span of the consumer is shrinking fast – remember the long 80s intro to a Madonna song vs. the modern Taylor Swift example (lyrics start on the first note)...today's buyers are impatient, if you don't have their attention in seconds—and hold it—they move on to something else.
- You can't just set up a Girl Scout Cookie stand at the front door or Walmart anymore...consumers will avoid you. They don't want to be stalked or forced
- Immersive technology can hold their attention and dramatically reduce the bounce rate...and SkyNav got a "difference maker" shout out from St James Plantation

Tips and Best Practices For Social Media

Presenter: Katie Campbell & Brandy Marshall, KCCreative

- Instagram is the fastest-growing, but Facebook is still the most relevant social media platform with 72% of online users with incomes over \$75,000 using it
- 30% of all internet users use Facebook at least once a day

- Stories & Video are king

Managing Leads

Presenter: Zach Ledbetter (Cookeville, TN), Anne Ross (Morristown, TN), Pam May (Roane County, TN)

- We heard from counties ranging in size from 50,000-75,000
- Tips, suggestions on lead management, digital v hardcopy, how quickly to respond, how to follow-up and track metrics

Community Track: RetireNC A Case Study of Follow Up, Follow Through and Results

Presenter: Kristy Peters, Focus3

- Households run by someone 65 and older spend an average of \$45,756 a year
- That's up from \$25,000 in the UNC Wilmington report many of us have been using
- The Atlanta Regional Commission study -- By adding an additional 1,000 new residents aged
- 65 or older, the ARC found that the region would see a \$7.8 billion increase in its GDP.

AARP Age Friendly Community and State Network

Presenter: Mitch Olszewski

- We learned about the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities & impact on physical design for all ages – transportation, streetscapes, sidewalks, parks & recreation, for example.

Trends Affecting Travel and Retirement Decision-Making

Presenter: Berkeley Young

- It's not so much about generations anymore, Boomers are like antique mustangs -- they're collector's items and they're not making any more of them. Unlike boomers, younger generations cannot be generalized. They're ore defined by life status...married, children, homeowner, urban/rural, etc.
- Think about the experience – everyone isn't there to catch trophy fish, they're having fun just being there.
- You must be relevant. Experiences are more important than "stuff"
- We learned about the "OK, boomer" movement
- We learned Jesus' middle name is Weejus

Friday – November 8th

Mainstreet Panel Discussion– Living Above the Store

Moderator: Nancy Williams, TN MainStreet Director

- Whatever housing you're planning in downtown, quadruple that because that's what the demand will be
- Partnership between Main Street and AARP to impact physical design, walkability, and livability

- We learned about the popularity of downtown living across the nation

Marketing to Baby Boomers One More Time

Presenter: Gregg Logan, RCLCO

- Buyers want a smaller home with less maintenance, but are still looking for a quality home
- The most popular price point is \$200-\$299,000 with \$300-\$399,000 being a close second
- And...there's no chance of a recession...it's nothing but blue skies and greenbacks for the foreseeable future 😊

The Job Market Opens Up at 60

Presenter: Steve Vassallo

- Looming crisis for boomers – many will need to continue working to supplement retirement income
- Best practices from top retirement communities.

Final Thought – last couple of years I've closed with a favorite quote:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou

Ramay – I'm thinking of you. You touched our hearts, lady.