

# Attracting and Retaining Senior Living Talent

By **Cole Marvin** - 04/18/2018



Working in senior living is one of the greatest joys of my life. It's why I've been involved in the industry for two decades and counting. Few other professions offer comparable opportunities to bond with older adults while simultaneously making a difference in their lives. The relationships I've built, the stories I've heard, and the education and life lessons I've gained throughout my career are invaluable. Being in a position of leadership, one of my main objectives is to present others with opportunities to experience the fulfillment of working with seniors.

This brings me to some striking statistics. The Pew Research Center estimates that 10,000 Baby Boomers currently turn 65 every day in the U.S. That rate will remain consistent for the next decade. According to Argentum, one of the nation's largest senior living associations, our industry needs to gain 1.2 million new employees by 2025 to sufficiently provide care and

services to this growing population. Attracting and retaining talent is therefore imperative for senior living organizations nationwide.

Community culture is crucial to recruiting and retaining employees. At Friendship Village Tempe, we strongly uphold respect, acceptance, compassion, trust and honesty within the workplace. "Open arms" is one of the core pillars of our community, because we understand that the uniqueness of each of our residents and staff is what makes Friendship Village special. Our community philosophy is that friends make the best neighbors, which in turn means that friends also make the best coworkers. We strive to provide all team members, from executives to part-time associates, with the support and resources necessary to succeed within their careers. We also offer competitive benefits and opportunities for professional growth, while recognizing hard work and dedication through our Employee of the Month and Employee of the Year awards. These factors give us an edge over the multitude of organizations our team members could potentially choose to work for.

Local outreach also plays a key role in attracting talent. Many people simply aren't aware of the abundance of career opportunities within senior living. Career fairs, social media, and partnerships with local schools and professional organizations present great opportunities for recruitment. Friendship Village is fortunate due to its proximity to **Mesa** Community College and Arizona State University, which gives us access to a vast pool of young talent. We engage with students on these campuses as much as possible, and even offer an education grant program for those who work at our community. The group of dedicated team members we've recruited through these efforts in recent years is living proof of the effectiveness of being proactive.

In the competitive senior living market, communities not only vie for residents, but for employees as well. With the need for new talent projected to increase substantially, it's critically important to cultivate environments that uplift team members. It's also vital for communities to be engaged within their localities. Employees who feel valued add value. Friendship Village employees are some of our strongest ambassadors due to our positive and rewarding workplace culture, which helps attract new team members and residents alike. The power of word of mouth simply can't be overstated.

#### Editor's Notes

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