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The Sales Lessons We Can Learn from the Hemline Index

By Melinda Haney (<https://growyouroccupancy.com/about/>)

As we head out of the pandemic, we head into 2023 nervous about the economy. Cost of doing business is higher than ever, therefore budgets are squeezed. As difficult as it is, now is the time to invest in your sales teams. With the economy weighing heavily on our minds, history can teach us a lesson on how to get through rough times in a fashionable way.

Since the turn of the last century the length of ladies' hemlines up and down the leg have followed the stock market – the highs corresponded to miniskirts and the lows to floor length dresses. This is



called the **hemline index** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hemline_index) theory.

How does The hemline index mirror senior living sales? When people had less to spend, fashion demanded an investment in more fabric to cover the full leg. When the economy was better, women spent money on hosiery, spending more on less. Buying shorter skirt lengths showed they could afford nicer undergarments.

The sales lessons of the hemline index

During the 2008 recession, the senior living communities that invested in their sales teams had record high occupancy, while those that didn't suffered – and in some cases went out of business. This time mirrors lessons learned then. Invest in the fabric of your sales team. Thoroughly review the aspects of your lead generation, prospect management, sales training, and referral management. Make sure you do not have any holes in your fabric. Don't be skimpy.

Another fashion trend during hard economic times is lipstick. I know, it seems far away from senior living but once again, it applies (pun intended). When times were tough and people were unable to afford travel or expensive gifts, more women purchased makeup, especially lipstick. Lipstick became a luxury; it was a noticeable fashion statement and women started to put their "faces on" before leaving the house. Looking put-together mattered more during hard economic times.

Attracting the most talented sales professionals is more important than ever. Sales teams should offer a great first impression of your community. A well-trained sales team should make it look natural – this takes commitment and practice. Sales can be demanding and stressful, it takes practice, coaching, and having the necessary tools and support to grow conversions, census, and revenue.

When the going gets tough, well, you know the rest. We need to get tough to face more challenges, more competition, rising costs, and customer fear. Each day offers an opportunity to advance a sale and it is never too much to expect results. Elevating skills and talent and adding time to sales (team effort) will pay off in additional move-ins and higher occupancy.



Moving into a senior living community is an emotional decision. Often a resident decides to move into the community based on a feeling. The feeling of the community or community culture is made up of many intentionally meaningful details. When the leadership of the executive director and the team of directors in a community plans and executes a strong culture, the community, as they say, sells itself. This is not effortless. To be executed with consistency it requires a fully aligned and executed sales infrastructure behind the scenes.

So, with interest rates are rising and economic times are difficult for many, remember we are in this together. With years of senior living experience, supporting sales teams is our passion. Forecasting and celebrating success is what we like most. We honor the seniors who fashioned themselves using the Hemline Theory and continue to enrich our lives with every exchange.

Ready to take your senior living sales success to a new level by elevating your executive directors to community sales leaders? Grow Your Occupancy provides the sales coaching, accountability coaching, and sales-skill coaching essential to fill that important role. Learn more about Grow Your Occupancy's sales coaching and training [here](https://growyouroccupancy.com/senior-living-sales-coaching/) (<https://growyouroccupancy.com/senior-living-sales-coaching/>). Or **[book your free 30-minute consultation](https://calendly.com/juliepodewitz/30-min-strategy-session?month=2022-01)** (<https://calendly.com/juliepodewitz/30-min-strategy-session?month=2022-01>) today.

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