

Selling to Seniors

The Monthly Report on the Mature Market

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System Helps Home Care Agencies Boost Referrals

Until recently, many home care agencies didn't have to think much about marketing. There were a relatively stable number of providers in many areas, and referrals simply sent a stream of clients to keep business humming.

But times have changed.

"Competition is getting tougher, and the lines between different types of services are blurring," explains Merrily Orsini, founder of corecubed, a marketing and communications firm specializing in the home care industry. "Everyone is mixing it up, and it's just not the same industry it was even a year ago."

The former owner of a home care business, Orsini decided agencies could use some assistance when it comes to marketing their services. "Home care agencies are not used to marketing or advertising," she tells *STS*. "The definition of marketing in home care is a sales person, and many agencies don't even have that."

That's why Orsini developed [MOST \(Marketing Opportunities & Sales Training\)](#). "I know the difficulties involved in trying to provide the best service possible to clients while running a business," she says. "My goal is to make marketing effortless."

MOST is designed to help agencies boost their visibility in the community and position themselves as an important resource for referral sources. Because home care is a need-based service, most clients come through professional referral sources.

The MOST program offers agencies a way to connect with these sources several times a month, primarily by providing useful information—instead of a sales pitch. For a monthly fee, the program offers direct-mail programs, industry news feeds, presentation materials, and e-mail newsletters that are branded and personalized for the agency.

The program offers a monthly theme, such as Alzheimer's awareness for November. Participating agencies choose the visuals they like and three messages—one for referral sources, one for care providers, and one for potential clients. The MOST program then follows through by sending out postcards, e-newsletters, press releases and links to downloadable resources that agencies can post on their Web sites. One piece each month is designed for home care workers to thank them for their efforts, boost retention or encourage recruitment.

The service is available for \$1,500 a month plus printing and mailing, which Orsini says is affordable for small and mid-size agencies that may not have their own marketing staff or could use some extra help. She makes MOST available only to one home care agency in a geographic region.

This story was sent to karen.hrubiak@corecubed.com by sellingtoseniors@msn.com.

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