



Helping to “flatten the curve” in a pandemic with a proactive communication campaign built on Invoca conversation intelligence.

Results at a Glance

16,000+

COVID-19-related calls
routed through Invoca

160

positive customer
reviews over six months

20%

reduction in resident
turnover

Invoca enables Spectrum Retirement to meet the COVID-19 crisis head-on with a response plan that is implemented in just 30 days — helping to keep people safe and informed and earning praise from residents and their families.



THE MISSION

“We had to shift our messaging, as a company, from how we enhance our residents’ lives to how we keep them safe. And we had to keep families informed. We were able to do those things effectively with help from Invoca.”

Spectrum Retirement Communities, LLC, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, is a leading operator of retirement, assisted living, and memory care communities, with 48 locations in 10 states. The company’s mission is simple: to create communities where seniors thrive. However, carrying out that mission is a complex undertaking — even outside of a global health crisis that’s had a devastating impact on the senior population, especially those in communal living situations.

In early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was taking hold in the U.S., Spectrum Retirement was engaged in a multichannel marketing campaign featuring the tagline, “Age Fearlessly. Live Colorfully.” The campaign was meant to help seniors — and their families — visualize the vibrant, active lifestyle that residents of Spectrum Retirement’s properties can enjoy.

“We wanted to emphasize that we can offer seniors a place to live where they can create new memories and focus on the things that they can still do,” explained Jeff Arduino, national director of sales and resident experience at Spectrum Retirement. “But when COVID-19 hit, the whole company — including the sales and marketing team — had to pivot to crisis response. Everything changed, almost overnight.”

“We had to stop all our marketing efforts,” said Shannon Johnson, the company’s director of marketing operations. “Suddenly, the whole idea of, ‘Go out and live your life, make new friends and have new adventures,’ was out of place. We had to shift our messaging, as a company, from how we enhance our residents’ lives to how we keep them safe. And we had to keep families informed. We were able to do those things effectively with help from Invoca.”

THE CHALLENGE

Spectrum Retirement had been using Invoca's AI-powered conversation intelligence platform since 2019, primarily for analyzing calls and gathering call attribution data. Just before the pandemic, the company's marketing and sales teams had started using Invoca's Signal AI conversation analytics, which identifies speech and language patterns from phone conversations to automatically predict outcomes. It wouldn't be long before they understood just how critical the real-time insights from that technology would be for the company, its staff, and its residents and their families in navigating a rapidly spreading public health crisis.

Moving fast to expand inbound and outbound communication channels

One of the first things Spectrum Retirement did in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was set up a multidisciplinary task force. "Shannon and I are sales and marketing people, but suddenly, we found ourselves on a team with our nurses and risk assessment experts, helping the company formulate an appropriate response to the crisis," said Arduino.

But being part of the task force helped everyone to focus their thoughts and energy. "It also allowed us to stay calm when it felt like there were a million fires burning every day and things were changing by the minute," said Johnson.

The response plan the task force developed called for a proactive communication strategy that included expanding the company's communication channels and creating centralized messaging. The plan would employ outbound efforts, like direct email, and inbound strategies, like using the Invoca platform to create 24-hour, toll-free hotlines for all of Spectrum Retirement's properties.

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THE RESOLUTION

Using Signal AI to identify and track COVID-19 concerns

To implement the crisis communication strategy and ensure messaging was consistent across all of Spectrum Retirement's channels, Arduino said the task force looked to maximize every available resource, including the Invoca platform and Signal AI. "We realized, 'Hey, we have all this cool technology at our fingertips. Let's make the most of what's already in our quiver.'"

"We'd already been doing a lot of phrase spotting with Signal AI, primarily for marketing attribution, but also for customer service and sales training purposes," said Johnson.

"When we started thinking about how to apply Signal AI in our crisis response efforts, we wondered, 'What can we learn about how people are talking about COVID-19?' So, we dove in and quickly created a COVID-19 phrase-spotting signal, focusing on words like coronavirus, virus, infectious disease, influenza, quarantine, and lockdown."

Johnson said the team started tracking call volume related to COVID-19 concerns, as well as the "tenor and tone" of conversations about the pandemic. "Using the Invoca platform, we were able to measure trends by location and create reports," she said. This enabled Spectrum to discover what residents and their families were really concerned about.

Keeping down the infection rate with relevant, timely communication

The Invoca platform also allowed the team at Spectrum to determine where calls were originating from. "We knew whether calls were coming from our website — or through the 24-hour, toll-free hotlines we'd set up using Invoca," said Arduino. "Based on the insights we were getting from Signal AI about what people were talking about and where they were located, we were able to make critical pivots in our response efforts."

Those pivots included adjusting information on the company's website and in other materials and communications. "We wanted to make sure we were addressing everything that residents and their family members were calling us about," said Johnson. She added that Spectrum Retirement received more than 16,000 calls through the Invoca platform just about COVID-19 during the first six months of the pandemic.



One change the team made early on, according to Arduino, was to remove the “Schedule a Visit” option from the company’s website. While property visits were a critical part of the sales process before the pandemic, social distancing guidelines and other measures designed to contain the spread of COVID-19 required Spectrum Retirement to halt that practice. So, the company shifted to offering virtual tours and made sure that no one would be confused about its visitor policy, said Arduino.

The result of these and other tough but necessary decisions for the business? Keeping the COVID-19 curve “really flat” across Spectrum Retirement’s 50 properties, said Johnson. In fact, the company saw an infection rate of just 1% among all its team members and residents during the first six months of the pandemic.

“A key reason we’ve kept the curve flat was that we were able to use Invoca data to develop effective communications that helped people understand what they needed to do to stay safe,” Johnson explained. “Whether you called our hotline, or you wanted to visit our website, or you received an email or letter from us, you got the same messaging.”

Earning positive customer reviews and reducing resident turnover

“Looking back, it’s hard to believe that everything we did — from setting up the task force and the COVID-19 phrase-spotting signal in Signal AI to expanding our communication channels — took place over the course of about 30 days,” said Arduino. “The early days of the pandemic were such a chaotic time for everybody. Things were changing so rapidly, including rules and regulations. We had to make some major decisions and interventions during those 30 days.”

The smart but tough decisions they made then, and in the months since have yielded positive returns beyond keeping the curve flat. Like other businesses in its industry, Spectrum has seen its revenues take a significant hit due to pandemic-related disruption. However, it would seem the company is well-positioned to take advantage of a recovery, given the positive feedback it continues to receive from residents and their families.

“Our ability to communicate proactively using the Invoca platform and other channels led to our company receiving 160 positive reviews across our portfolio in the first six months of the pandemic,” said Arduino. “That tells us that families and residents are happy with how we’ve been able to provide care and respond to their concerns during this critical time.” Johnson added, “I think another one of the most significant results for us during this crisis was seeing 20% lower resident turnover during the last six months of 2020, compared to the same period in 2019. I see that as proof of our crisis response strategy working — that our immediate, proactive communication style, our centralized messaging, and all our pivots and interventions along the way, made a difference.”

Strategizing on how to build back revenue in the year ahead

The sales and marketing team at Spectrum Retirement started using the Invoca platform to analyze all inbound calls, including landline calls, and not just those coming in from the website or other marketing mediums. “We wanted to understand what was happening on the operation side of our business,” Arduino explained.

The team also added a new arrow to their quiver: Invoca’s Signal Discovery tool, which provides a complete view into customer conversations, helping marketers to access new first-party data and insights. “The technology has been so valuable in helping us understand what’s going on from a resident and customer experience standpoint. It’s helped us to make improvements as needed during the crisis,” said Arduino.

As for what’s ahead, Arduino and Johnson said they are focused on finding ways to help enhance Spectrum Retirement’s bottom line, even as the pandemic persists. “We need to make up for six months’ worth of revenue lost in 2020 due to the pandemic,” Arduino said. “So, we’re looking more at attribution and reimplementing our channels, and we’re really excited about all the tools we have to do that.”

“Senior living remains a critical need that must be filled — the pandemic hasn’t changed that,” said Johnson. “We’re definitely strategizing and thinking about how to use our Invoca solutions and other resources in the months ahead to market Spectrum Retirement’s properties in a safe, comfortable way that’s also true to our brand and our mission to enhance the lives of seniors.”

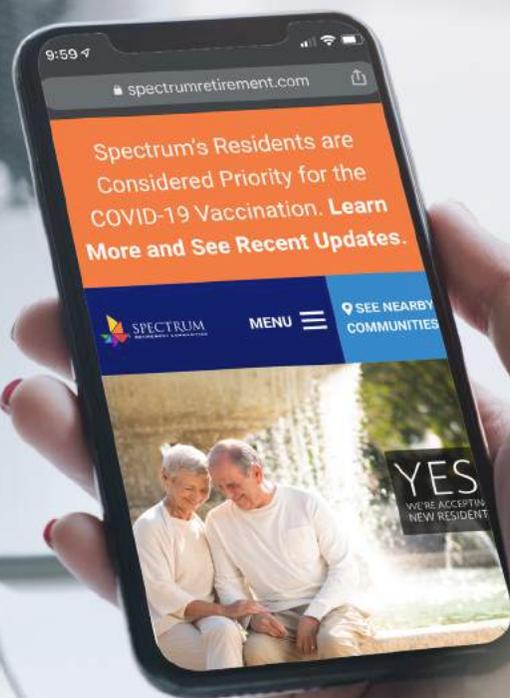
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