

Q&A

One-on-One with

SUSAN CURLEE



Susan Curlee is a Hospitality and Senior Living Care manufacturer's representative in Central Florida

Senior care living has changed from a dreadful to a desired retirement option. How has that perception been altered? What do you predict will happen in the next 5 to 10 years?

The perception of senior living has indeed changed. The number of new facilities and number of relatively healthy seniors willing to live in these facilities is a testament to that. The expectations of baby boomers around aging is quite different from those of the “greatest generation”. As boomers continue to age in greater numbers, plan to see more growth of the Senior Living market. Senior Care owners are paying close attention to these trends, particularly in the private pay sector.

Talk about Senior Care from the perspective of Design.

I am not a designer, but what I’ve learned is that functionality and durability are key considerations in this setting. An example that emphasizes the strong need for both would be seating. It’s important to consider the dimensional requirements needed for seniors and to select a fabric that is appropriate for this environment as well. Important factors include: choice of color & texture, stain resistance, ease of cleaning & maintenance.

Talk about Senior Care from the perspective of Purchasers.

Purchasers should fully understand what they are buying for Senior Care use. Choose furniture that will have a long product lifecycle and that is easy to maintain; select furniture that supports efforts in limiting health-care associated infections by being antimicrobial, water resistant and easy to clean; look for manufacturers who offer a generous warranty in terms of both scope and length; pay attention to lead times and installation services.

How do medical impairments affect the decision-making process within the built environment?

Alzheimers and dementia are prime examples of medical impairments that now commonly influence the built environment. Without question there are other diseases that fit into this category. Design decisions and purchases surrounding these impairments are frequently influenced by Evidence Based Design. EBD is a rapidly growing area of study that is not only being used to inform decision making but also to create innovative products for the Senior Living market

What are your recommendations for those in Hospitality wanting to get more involved in Senior Care?

For those looking to get involved in this market plan to leverage your core organizational strengths while developing your understanding of Senior Care. It’s a different business in many respects. My advice would be to seek out and work with those who have experience and have had success in Senior Living. This will add value and shorten your learning curve. Working with those who have experience in both Hospitality and Senior Living is an added plus.