



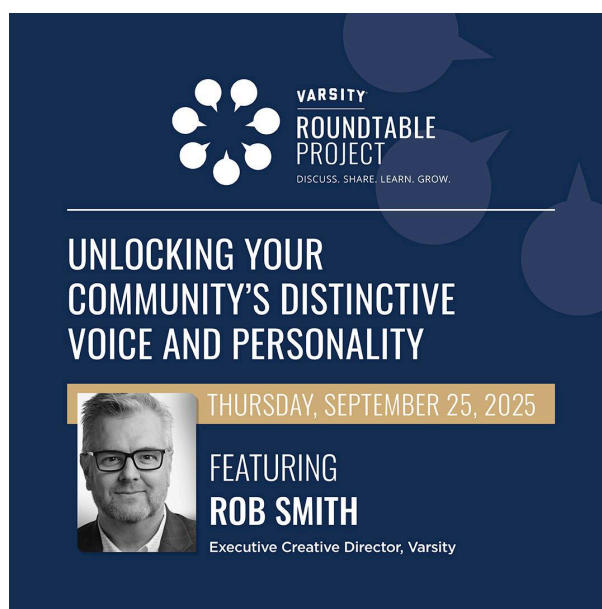
SALES AND MARKETING ROUNDTABLE #276: Unlocking Your Community's Distinctive Voice and Personality with Rob Smith

Thank you to everyone who attended our latest Sales and Marketing Roundtable! To provide anonymity during the Roundtable discussion, participants and their communities will not be identified.

ABOUT OUR GUEST

For this week's Roundtable we were excited to host Varsity's own Executive Creative Director, Rob Smith, for a discussion about unlocking your community's distinct voice.

Rob shared insights and strategies on how to effectively harness your community's personality to bring clarity, consistency, and authenticity to the way you connect with prospects and residents.



"What makes a community unique? It's all about the people—the residents, the staff, the leadership. It's that unique blend of personalities that form the community voice."

(Rob Smith)



VarsityBranding.com

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

- **UNIQUE COMMUNITY IDENTITY:** To stand out in a competitive market, it's crucial to identify and showcase the unique traits and experiences that define your community. This distinct personality helps capture the attention of potential residents and differentiates you from competition.
- **ENGAGING STORYTELLING:** Highlighting your community's authentic voice through compelling stories about residents, staff, and interactions helps create deep emotional connections with prospective residents. This narrative approach is essential in turning initial interest into lasting relationships.
- **ARCHETYPES FOR BRAND DEPTH:** Incorporating Jungian archetypes into your brand strategy helps dimensionalize and enrich your community's voice. Choosing the right archetype or combination can powerfully convey your community's core values and aspirations to potential residents.
- **DYNAMIC BRAND POSITIONING:** Through qualitative engagement with community leadership and archetype exploration, identify not only what your community is today but also its future potential. Craft an authentic, aspirational brand positioning that distinguishes your community in the marketplace and resonates deeply with your target audience.

LINKS & CONTACT INFO

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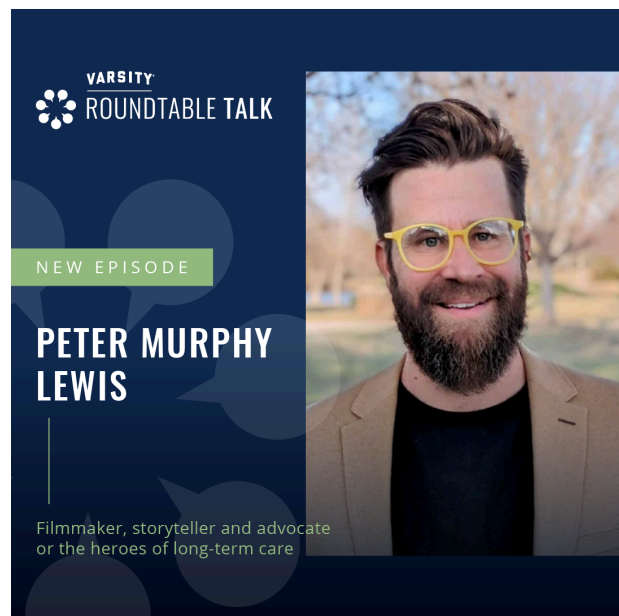
COMING UP ON VARSITY'S ROUNDTABLE!

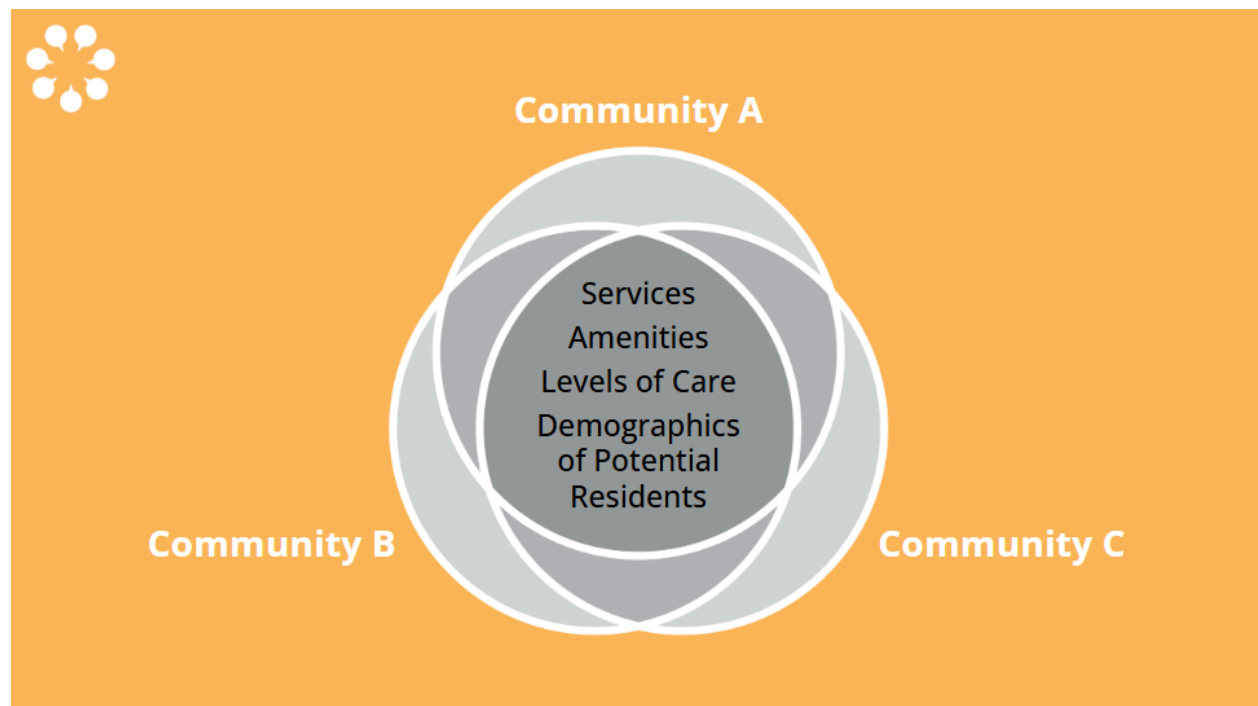
Please join our next Roundtable gathering on Thursday, October 2 at noon ET, 11 a.m. CT and 9 a.m. PT. We'll be joined by Meg Stoltzfus from Financial Council. She'll be discussing "Integrating Place Planning into Financial Planning."

NEW ON VARSITY'S PODCAST, ROUNDTABLE TALK

On our newest episode of Varsity's Roundtable Talk, we sit down with Peter Murphy Lewis, documentary filmmaker and co-creator of People Worth Caring About, a YouTube series that shines a spotlight on caregivers in long-term care communities across the country.

Peter shares how his grandparents' positive experiences in senior living inspired his work and why focusing on staff stories helps shift public perception. He recalls moving encounters in hospice, lessons about dignity and language, and how storytelling can inspire young people to see caregiving as a calling. Check out the [episode here](#) on the Varsity website!





The main topic today is about highlighting your community's unique personality. In competitive markets, many communities have overlapping features like services and amenities, which makes it crucial to find that special aspect that sets you apart. This is the key to catching potential residents' attention and differentiating from competitors.



Community A

Residents • Staff • Leadership

Services

Associations

What really makes a community stand out? It's all about the people—the residents, staff, and leadership blend their personalities to create a distinct voice. It's the friendships, passions, and interactions that are tough to list but intuitively felt. Varsity dives deep into this discovery process, interacting with everyone from residents to board members, to uncover those unique stories that define a community.



It's one thing to build spaces or stock amenities, but it's another to spark genuine community. You can create a workshop, but you can't force people to gather twice a week to make benches. You can stock the bar, but you can't script happy hour conversations. You can plan activities, but you can't manufacture the kind of resident-led projects that ripple out and make a real impact beyond the community itself.



At the heart of it all is the community voice, the core of your community brand that draws in prospects and often resonates more than any traditional marketing material. Our role is to help you capture this voice through storytelling—our mission is to craft stories that inspire people to raise their hands and say, "Yes, tell me more."



To make an impact, our stories need to do three key things. First, they must be true—reflecting real life on campus and connecting real people. Misleading marketing that promises what isn't there can quickly derail a prospect's journey.

Second, stories need to be unique, capturing aspects that no other community can claim. Authenticity is crucial; we can't just mimic others.

Lastly, stories must be compelling, driving people to take action, like raising their hand to say "I want to learn more." When stories are true, unique, and compelling, they attract the right prospects and ensure the message resonates from the initial marketing phase to on-campus experiences. This alignment significantly boosts your ability to guide prospects through the sales journey.



CREATIVE BRIEF

PROJECT:

GET:

The target

WHO:

The problem

TO:

The action

BY:

The message

AUDIENCE:

DEMOGRAPHIC:

REASONS TO BELIEVE:

THE ONE THOUGHT:

REFERENCES MATERIALS:

DELIVERABLES:

PLANNED MEDIA CHANNELS:

How do we go about telling these stories? One key tool is the creative brief. If you've worked with an agency or a creative team, you've likely encountered one. It outlines the message by detailing how to get a specific person with a particular problem to take a desired action. The brief includes crucial information such as the target audience, demographics, and reasons to believe. In essence, it's the blueprint for crafting an impactful message.



I want to highlight a tool we call the brand synopsis, or brand platform. While many agencies have their versions of brand pyramids, we use ours to encompass brand positioning, benefits, personality, values, promise, and more. It's distinct from the creative brief, which provides the content of the message. The brand synopsis serves as a filter for the brand voice, guiding how we communicate the message, its tone, and its essence. This tool is pivotal in shaping the brand voice and messaging.



A key element in determining the brand voice is the brand personality. At Varsity, we draw on the 12 Jungian archetypes to shape our understanding of brand personality, a method used not only by us but also described in many branding books.

These archetypes form the backbone of countless stories we encounter in books, myths, and movies, where characters embody these relatable archetypes. By aligning our communities with these archetypes, we can craft authentic stories that truly resonate. While some archetypes might seem more niche in the senior living context, they all have a role to play in telling compelling, honest stories about our communities.



Most of these archetypes are intuitive and form a baseline personality for a brand. As a pop culture and comic book enthusiast, I love illustrating this with Batman and Superman. Both are heroes, but we recognize their differences due to the stories and portrayals we've seen in films.

Superman, who rescues cats and even squirrels from harm, embodies the hero innocent archetype. In contrast, Batman operates in shadows and bends rules, fitting the hero outlaw archetype. By layering these archetypes, we add depth and distinctiveness to brand voices, making them more easily understood and relatable.



Another example: The New York Times versus Sesame Street. Both are knowledge providers, fitting into the sage category, but they approach it differently. The New York Times aligns with the Sage Ruler archetype, given its authoritative and established stance.

In contrast, Sesame Street embodies Sage Innocent, communicating in a straightforward and approachable manner for its audience. At Varsity, we use dual archetypes like these to give stories depth and specificity, allowing us to convey tailored and nuanced narratives.



Consider Snickers, Calgon, Apple, and Disney—four brands many of us have interacted with. The common thread among them is the magician archetype, as they each offer transformational experiences.

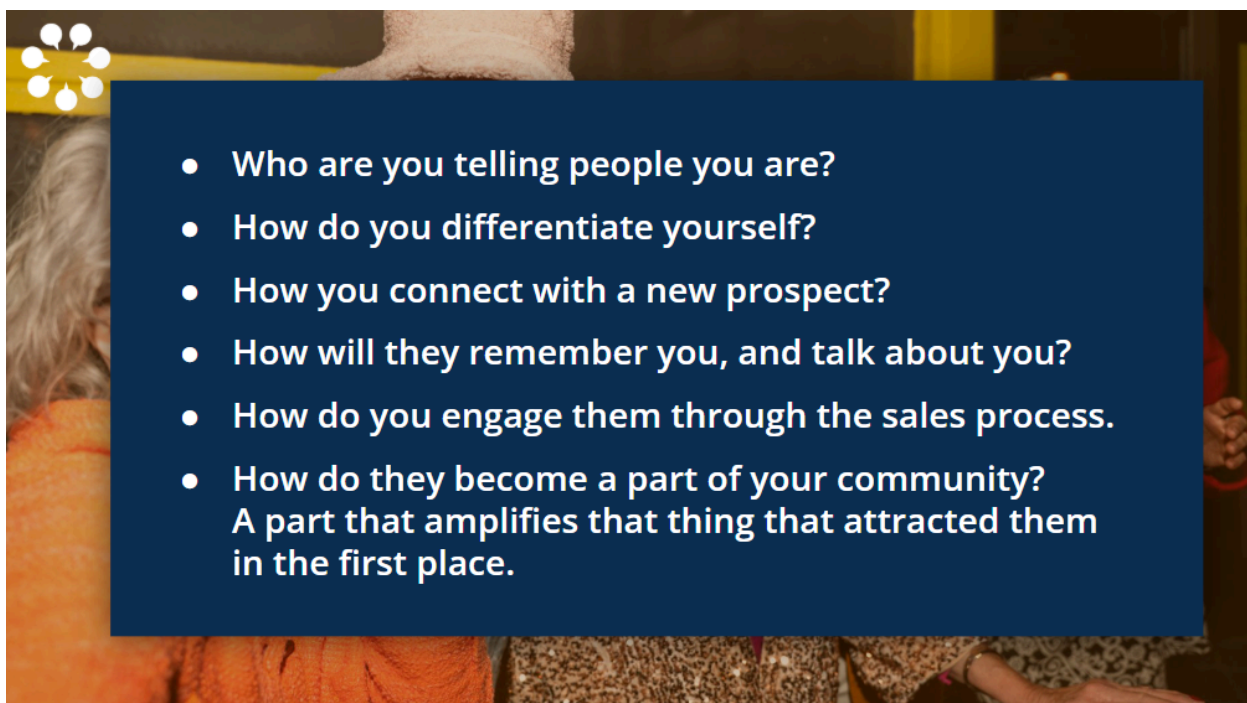
While applying our dual-archetype approach, we might find these brands fitting into the magician space, but there's room to explore additional archetypes that complement their transformational essence.



So the key takeaway here is about discovering and defining your unique community voice. What are the distinctive traits and experiences that set your community apart, even incrementally, from others? It's important to communicate a brand voice that genuinely captures your community's essence and encourages people to engage further.

While certain archetypes like caregiver or regular guy/gal can feel omnipresent across senior living communities, making them less distinct, the goal is to dig deeper. Authenticity is crucial, and while many communities may claim friendliness or a family-like atmosphere, it's about finding that specific blend of attributes unique to your community. As Derek highlighted, these qualities are often categorical in the senior living space.

The aim is to have a strong point of view in the marketplace, ensuring that when potential residents are considering their options, your community stands out, and is at least among those they consider. It's about making a lasting impression, rooted in authenticity, that resonates with the right audience.



- Who are you telling people you are?
- How do you differentiate yourself?
- How you connect with a new prospect?
- How will they remember you, and talk about you?
- How do you engage them through the sales process.
- How do they become a part of your community?
A part that amplifies that thing that attracted them
in the first place.

To wrap up, it's essential to recognize that every community carries a mix of different traits. The challenge and opportunity lie in identifying which aspects authentically define your community and rise to the forefront. Key questions include: How are you portraying your identity to prospects? How do you differentiate yourselves and forge connections with new prospects in memorable ways?

Engagement isn't just about marketing; it's about how you interact during the entire sales process. Once an agency like Varsity identifies interested prospects, it's up to you and your sales team to guide them, demonstrating that your community truly embodies its brand promise. Ultimately, prospects should not only feel welcomed into your community but also become integral members who resonate with the very qualities that drew them in.

This exploration isn't just theoretical; it's a practical approach we implement daily to establish brand messages that genuinely reflect your community.



The Prompt:

Please write a headline and 2 short sentences of copy inviting a prospective resident to an open house event at my independent living, senior living community. We will serve light hors d'oeuvres and you will have an opportunity to learn more about us and tour the community.

Headline:

You're Invited: Discover Your Next Chapter at Our Open House

Copy:

Join us for an afternoon of light hors d'oeuvres, warm hospitality, and guided tours of our vibrant independent living community. Meet our team, explore our amenities, and see what makes this the perfect place to call home.

Let's try a brief exercise to illustrate using a brand filter with AI. When using tools like ChatGPT, you might notice common patterns, like overusing em dashes. I started with a straightforward prompt asking for a headline and a couple of sentences inviting prospective residents to an open house at an independent living community, mentioning light hors d'oeuvres and a tour.

The AI-generated suggestion was:

HEADLINE: You're Invited: Discover Your Next Chapter at Our Open House.

COPY: Join us for an afternoon of light hors d'oeuvres, warm hospitality, and guided tours of our vibrant independent living community. Meet the team, explore our amenities, and see what makes this the perfect place to call home.

This is a standard output, perfectly legitimate for a mailer and might even be something you've used before to successfully draw attendees.



The Prompt:

Please write a headline and 2 short sentences of copy inviting a prospective resident to an open house event at my independent living, senior living community. We will serve light hors d'oeuvres and you will have an opportunity to learn more about us and tour the community. My community's brand archetype is hero.

Headline:

Step Into the Life You Deserve — Join Us for Our Open House

Copy:

Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres as you explore a community built for confident, independent living. Tour our beautiful campus, meet our passionate team, and discover how we empower residents to thrive every day.

When we add a brand personality filter, like the hero archetype, to the prompt, it transforms the message:

HEADLINE: Step into the Life You Deserve. Join Us for Our Open House.

COPY: Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres as you explore a community built for confident, independent living. Tour our beautiful campus, meet our passionate team, and discover how we empower residents to thrive every day.

By applying this filter, even AI can reflect the heroic attributes of confidence and empowerment, distinguishing your brand from competitors. This shift highlights how a well-defined brand personality can significantly enhance and differentiate your messaging.



The Prompt:

Please write a headline and 2 short sentences of copy inviting a prospective resident to an open house event at my independent living, senior living community. We will serve light hors d'oeuvres and you will have an opportunity to learn more about us and tour the community. My community's brand archetype is outlaw.

Headline:

Break Free and Live Boldly — You're Invited to Our Open House

Copy:

Join us for light hors d'oeuvres and a fresh perspective on independent living that dares to be different. Tour our community, meet trailblazing residents, and see how we're redefining retirement on our own terms.

Applying the outlaw archetype filter gives us a daring and bold approach:

HEADLINE: Break Free and Live Boldly. You're Invited to Our Open House.

COPY: Join us for light hors d'oeuvres—and a fresh perspective on independent living that dares to be different. Tour our community, meet trailblazing residents, and see how we're redefining retirement on your terms.

The outlaw filter infuses the message with a sense of adventure and individuality, emphasizing a unique and unconventional lifestyle. This approach can attract those who resonate with a more daring and independent mindset, making them perfect fits for your community.



The Prompt:

Please write a headline and 2 short sentences of copy inviting a prospective resident to an open house event at my independent living, senior living community. We will serve light hors d'oeuvres and you will have an opportunity to learn more about us and tour the community. My community's brand archetype is hero and outlaw.

Headline:

Defy Expectations. Embrace Independence. Join Us for Our Open House.

Copy:

Enjoy light hors d'oeuvres as you explore a bold, empowering community designed for those who live life on their own terms. Tour our campus, meet our spirited team, and discover how we champion your freedom to thrive.

With the dual archetype of Hero Outlaw, the message gains a powerful and rebellious edge that encourages recipients to “defy expectations” and offers an “empowering community designed for those who live life on their own terms.”

This combination of hero and outlaw archetypes creates a message that's both empowering and bold, appealing to those who seek both independence and transformation in their living experience. It demonstrates how incorporating these archetypal filters can create engaging and distinctive marketing messages that catch the right audience's attention.



- Telling **true, unique and compelling** stories is the best way to attract and inspire.
- **Archetypes** are at the core of stories and how we connect with them.
- Archetypes can be used to dimensionalize a **brand voice** differentiating it from others in the market.

Here's a recap of the key points from our discussion:

1. **TRUE, UNIQUE, AND COMPELLING STORIES:** The best way to attract and inspire prospective residents is by telling stories that are authentic, distinctive, and engaging. This approach helps in making emotional connections with your audience.
2. **ARCHETYPES AT THE CORE:** Archetypes are fundamental to stories and characters, resonating with us on a personal level because we all embody aspects of these archetypes in some way.
3. **USING ARCHETYPES FOR BRAND DIFFERENTIATION:** By applying dual archetypal filters, we can add depth and dimension to a brand's voice, setting it apart from competitors and creating a unique identity in the market.

QUESTIONS

HOW DO YOU DETERMINE WHICH ARCHETYPE OUR COMMUNITY IS?

To determine a community's archetype, we engage in a collaborative branding process. This involves leadership discussions to explore potential brand positions and an exercise with the 12 archetypes, using qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups.

We aim to identify a personality that reflects both your current identity and future aspirations. Through this dialogue, we challenge common defaults like "caregiver" to find a unique space for your community, ensuring your brand position and personality are authentic, aspirational, and distinct in the marketplace.