



SALES AND MARKETING ROUNDTABLE #279: Turning Prospects into Residents with Hoyle Koontz

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

This week on Varsity's Roundtable, we were joined by Hoyle Koontz, Partner at The Vectre, for an engaging session about how to turn prospects into residents.

Hoyle discussed sales barriers you need to know more about — and how to overcome them — to help you build greater empathy for your prospects and reimagine your sales process.



“Every prospect is really just trying to answer one question: What’s in it for me?” (Hoyle Koontz)



FRESH PERSPECTIVES

- **TOO MANY CHOICES CAN STALL DECISIONS** – Senior living prospects often face “analysis paralysis.” With endless options for communities, floor plans, and financial plans, the path forward becomes overwhelming. Simplifying and personalizing the experience helps prospects move from indecision to action.
- **LESS IS MORE IN SALES TOURS** – The “Gilligan tour”—long, detail-heavy, and exhausting—doesn’t stick. Today’s prospects need focused, meaningful interactions that highlight what’s truly unique about a community, not a laundry list of features they’ll forget by tomorrow.
- **SEEING IS REMEMBERING** – With 40% of the brain’s nerve fibers tied to vision, visual storytelling isn’t optional—it’s essential. Using personalized, relevant imagery helps information “stick,” while cluttered visuals only add confusion.
- **PERSONALIZATION DRIVES CONVERSION** – Eight out of ten prospects are more likely to buy when they feel seen and understood. From customized tours to individualized digital brochures, personalization turns sales from transactional to relational.
- **MEET PROSPECTS WHERE THEY ARE** – Instead of waiting for leads to visit the community, Vectre’s *YourTour* brings the experience to them. Virtual tools allow sales teams to connect with out-of-market prospects early—building relationships and breaking down misconceptions before a visit even happens.
- **PRICE STRUCTURED LIKE SENIOR LIVING ITSELF** – The Vectre’s pricing model mirrors the industry it serves: an entry (setup) fee plus monthly fees. Ranging from \$10,000 to \$18,000 for setup, the investment is designed to grow with a community’s needs—paying off through more efficient sales processes and higher conversions.

LINKS & CONTACT INFO

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COMING UP ON VARSITY'S ROUNDTABLE!

Please join our next Roundtable gathering on Thursday, October 23 at noon ET, 11 a.m. CT and 9 a.m. PT. We'll be joined by Dr. Kathleen Potempa from HealthyLifetime who will be discussing "Tracking 'Well-Being': Soft measures for hard-wired outcomes."

NEW ON VARSITY'S PODCAST, ROUNDTABLE TALK

AgeTech is one of the fastest-growing frontiers in innovation, with the potential to transform how older adults live, connect, and thrive. At the center of this movement is Rick Robinson, Vice President and General Manager of the AgeTech Collaborative from AARP, who is building a vibrant ecosystem of startups, investors, and enterprises committed to reshaping the future of aging.

In this episode of Roundtable Talk, Rick discusses how the collaborative accelerates startups, drives inclusivity in product design, and helps older adults embrace new technology. He also highlights the promise of AI and embodied devices to ease challenges like social isolation and the caregiver shortage. Check out the [episode here](#) on the Varsity website!



Next Gen Sales Tools: Turning Prospects into Residents

Hoyle Koontz, The Vectre



Salemtowne was the first senior living community the Vectre team partnered with, way back in 2009. That early collaboration was a crash course in the world of senior living and set the foundation for everything that followed. Since then, the industry has evolved, and today's discussion is all about the hurdles communities face now and the creative solutions being developed to overcome them.

Objectives:

- Deeper dive into some sales barriers that you need to know more about.
- Develop additional empathy for your prospects.
- Consider how you might alter, evolve, or revolutionize your sales process.

The goal today is to take a closer look at the barriers holding back the senior living industry and to better understand the people we're trying to reach. As we dig into these challenges, everyone's encouraged to think about how their own sales approach could change: maybe tweak it a bit, evolve it meaningfully, or even flip it on its head. And for those ready to completely rethink the process, the team is eager to hear how you plan to make that happen.



The team behind *YourTour*—a platform created by The Vectre—has spent more than 15 years focused on senior living. The platform serves as a sales enablement tool built from hands-on experience with around 150 communities nationwide. This is their third iteration of the technology—Hoyle jokes it’s their “third at bat,” in true baseball playoff spirit—and they continue to roll out new updates and enhancements to keep it evolving.



The Paradox of Choice:

- Is senior living right for me?
- What community do I choose?
- What floor plan do I choose?
- What financial plan do I choose?
- What finishes do I choose?
- What furniture do I bring with me?

One major challenge in senior living sales is the *paradox of choice*—the idea that too many options can actually make decisions harder. Prospective residents face a long list of questions: Is senior living right for me? Which community should I choose? What floor plan, financial plan, or finishes fit best? Even down to what furniture to bring, the sheer number of decisions can lead to what Hoyle calls “kicking the can”—putting off the move entirely by not deciding at all.

To illustrate, Hoyle compares it to ordering from The Cheesecake Factory’s famously massive menu. Faced with too many choices, people take two to three times longer to order, and sometimes leave less satisfied. The same thing happens with senior living prospects—they get overwhelmed, freeze up, and delay taking action. The key to overcoming it, Hoyle notes, lies in *personalization*: simplifying decisions and helping each prospect feel that the experience is tailored to them.

Too Much Information

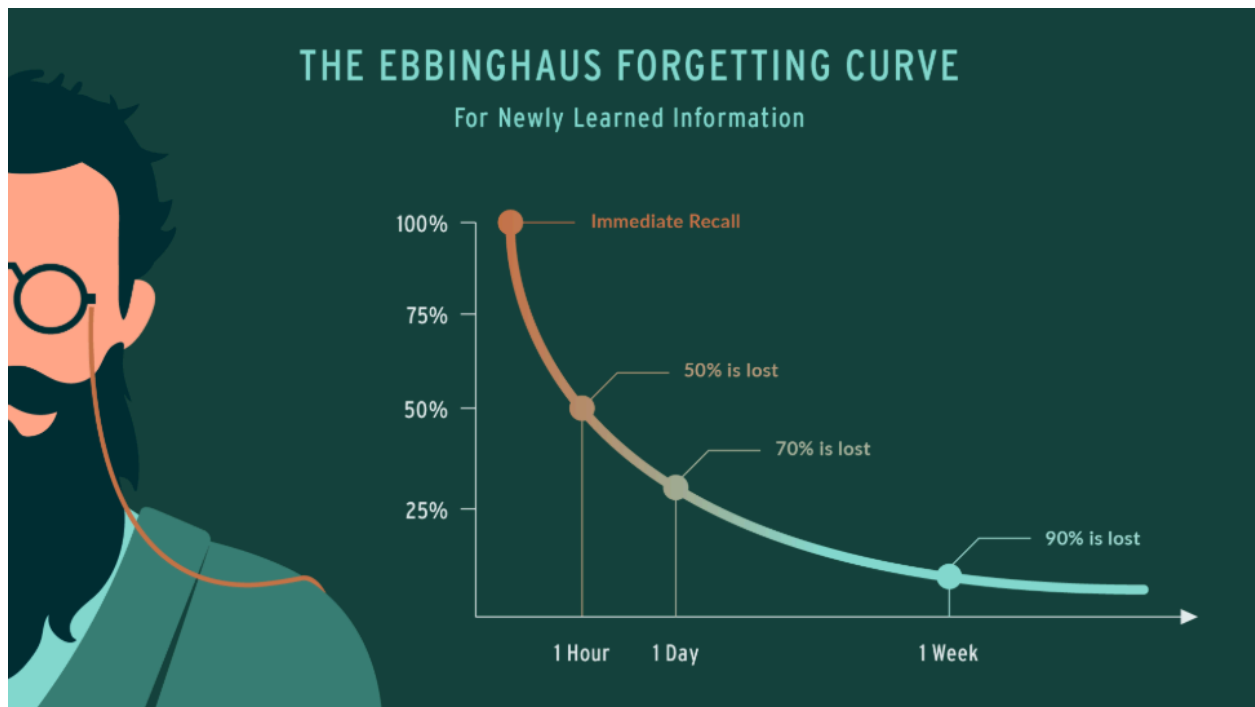
- Pricing, Amenities, Contracts
- Differentiators get lost i.e. “Sea of Sameness”
- Emotional context
- Confusion leads to defaulting to ‘no’ as the safest option (Status Quo Bias)
- Glazed expressions or decreased engagement



Another common hurdle in senior living sales is information overload. When prospects are hit with too many details at once, their eyes glaze over, and the message gets lost.

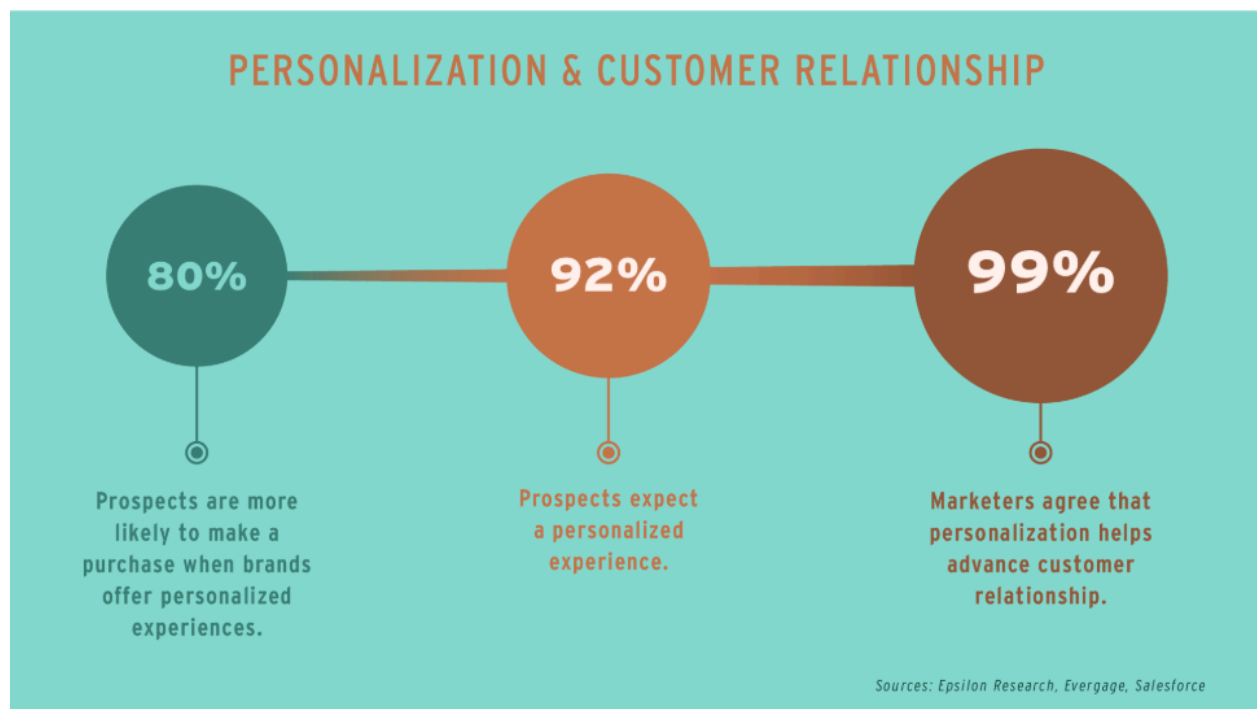
Hoyle jokes about the “Gilligan tour,” a reference to *Gilligan’s Island* and its “three-hour tour.” In this case, it’s when staff lead prospects on an exhausting, detail-heavy journey through every inch of the community, leaving them stranded in a sea of too much information they’ll soon forget.

He also calls out the so-called “optimum tour path,” which he says is often a myth dreamed up by architects eager to show off a community’s flashiest features. Instead of following a scripted route that highlights the same amenities—like the dining room, bistro, or fitness center—that every other community offers, Hoyle urges teams to focus on what truly makes their experience different. Simplifying the message and personalizing the tour helps prospects actually connect, rather than tune out.



Another key challenge is what Hoyle calls the *forgetting curve*. He explains that prospects—and even the people giving tours—forget most of what they hear, often faster than they realize. The concept comes from researcher Hermann Ebbinghaus, who studied how quickly people lose newly learned information. Within an hour, we forget about half of what we just learned; within a day, 70%; and within a week, 90%.

Now, if you apply that to senior living sales, it's easy to see why the "Gilligan tour" is so ineffective. Prospects are flooded with information they'll barely remember, which means all that time and effort go to waste. The takeaway: rethink how information is shared and focus on creating efficient, memorable experiences that truly stick.



A big piece of the puzzle is *personalization*. Too often, sales teams fall into the trap of “feature dumping”—rattling off a list of amenities like dining rooms, bistros, and fitness centers that every community has. That approach doesn’t connect, especially when there hasn’t been much effort put into discovery or getting to know the individual prospect.

Data backs this up: according to Salesforce and its partners, 80% of prospects are more likely to make a purchase when they’re offered a personalized experience. In senior living, that means tailoring the sales conversation to each person’s story, priorities, and motivations—turning a generic pitch into something that feels meaningful and relevant.

Save to the Hard Drive:

- Seeing is believing! ~40% of our brain's nerve fibers are linked to the retina. [Source: "Brain-Based Learning"]
- The human eye can register 36,000 visual messages every hour. [Source: Visual Teaching Alliance]
- Visual information processing remains robust even as verbal processing declines with age.



The big takeaway here is that *seeing is believing*. Hoyle points out that about 40% of the brain's nerve fibers are connected to the eyes, meaning we process visual information faster and more effectively than almost anything else. Even as people age, visual processing remains strong—so the brain “saves” more when it learns through the eyes.

That's why personalization shouldn't just be about words; it should also be about what prospects *see*. Visual content that's relevant to their specific interests or lifestyle helps the message stick. On the flip side, cluttered or irrelevant visuals only add confusion and noise to the sales process. The goal is to make what's shown as personal and meaningful as what's said.

TAKE-AWAYS = NUGGETS

- No Feature-Dumping... No 'Gilligan' Tours
- Drive the sale - don't give too many options that stall.
- Visual storytelling and repetition for retention.
- Personalize for the WIN!! Craft a solution.
- Take the community to your prospect.

The key takeaways tie everything together: skip the feature dumping, ditch the “Gilligan tours,” and rethink what efficiency really means in your sales process. Group tours might seem like a time-saver, but they often fail to connect with prospects on a personal level. Instead, focus on driving the sale by reducing unnecessary choices, telling stories visually, and repeating important information to boost retention.

At the heart of it all is one simple question every prospect is asking: *What's in it for me?* The most effective approach is one that's tailored, focused, and answers that question directly. Hoyle also encourages a shift in perspective—don't just bring prospects to your community, bring your community to them. With more leads coming from outside local markets (often through adult children in other regions), finding ways to showcase your community virtually or remotely is becoming essential.

YOURTOUR

by  **VECTRE**



Hoyle transitions from the theory of personalization and efficiency into a live demo of *Your Tour*, Vectre’s web-based sales enablement platform for senior living. He explains that the platform sits in the hands of sales counselors and allows them to craft personalized, interactive experiences for each prospect—like building a custom tour for “Emily” in his example.

The platform features an interactive community map, letting counselors spotlight only the residences or amenities that match a prospect’s interests. A new waitlist management tool adds efficiency by helping sales teams showcase specific available residences to those on waitlists. There’s also a “Choose Your Own Adventure” page showcasing amenities, designed to help prospects imagine a day in their new lifestyle—free from home maintenance and filled with activities they love.

To address the paradox of choice, the tool lets users filter options (like showing only two-bedroom units) and uses urgency banners to help drive decisions. Rich media features, such as virtual tours and palette options for new developments, make it easier for prospects to visualize their future homes.

QUESTIONS

WHAT KIND OF INVESTMENT OR BUDGET SHOULD TEAMS PLAN FOR WHEN CONSIDERING A PLATFORM LIKE THIS?

Hoyle explains that pricing is structured much like senior living itself—with an entry fee and ongoing monthly costs. The setup, or “entry,” fee covers implementation and customization, while the monthly fees support hosting, content management, and back-end tools.

Costs vary depending on the size and makeup of the community, since The Vectre looks at the full unit mix—from independent living to assisted living and memory care. Smaller communities might come in around \$10,000 for setup, while larger, more complex communities typically top out around \$18,000.

Monthly fees are adjusted based on the specific tools and features a client chooses. Hoyle notes that while there are competitors in the space, The Vectre’s deep focus on senior living sets them apart. He invites anyone interested in more details to connect with the team at upcoming industry events, like SMASH or LeadingAge, where they’ll also be debuting a new product called *Tour Guide AI*.