

Getting Started Checklist

Ready to start using Opening Doors to Aging Services, but want some direction?

Read the strategies and messages to reach the general public and potential employees. Then follow this checklist to get the hang of it. Soon you'll feel comfortable applying the strategies to all your communications!

GUIDANCE FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES

Clean Your Copy.

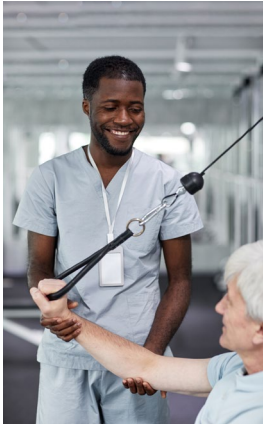
Scour your text for negative words:

- business, company, customer
- elderly, frail
- facility
- industry
- worker

Replace them with positive language:

- nonprofit or faith-based organization
- older adults
- community or residence
- field or sector
- professional or caregiver

(Check the *LeadingAge Language Guide* for other recommendations.)



Fix Your Photos.



Use images of people. Feature older adults who are active, engaged with others, and living with independence. Also include your staff, families of residents, and volunteers.



De-emphasize photos of buildings, landscapes, empty rooms. Show your venue with people actively enjoying it.



Remove photos of older adults alone, wrinkled hands, etc.

Resources

[LeadingAge Language Guide](#)

[Visual and Design Guide](#)

Show and Quote Trusted Messengers—Your Employees.



Include photos of your employees (ideally with older adults) from all roles.



Add testimonials from current employees, especially on your Careers landing page and in all your employment communications.



Develop content to showcase your employees, especially professional caregivers.

(See *examples at Opening Doors Articles and Resources.*)

Use These Tested Messages with Consumers.



Write text that builds consumer confidence in aging services. Emphasize:

- The independence of older adults (due to your care and services).
- The quality care you provide.
- The dedicated professional caregivers in your organization. Describe them as professional, dedicated, compassionate, etc.
- Your nonprofit and/or faith-based status (and your people-focused mission).

GUIDANCE FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES

Use These Tested Messages to Attract Potential Employees.



Convey in your recruitment text, testimonials, and headlines that colleagues at your organization:

- Find meaning and purpose and make a difference in others' lives through their work. (Emphasize this top-testing message by rephrasing and repeating it.)
- Build strong bonds and relationships with residents, clients, and their families.
- Help families keep their loved ones healthy, happy, and safe.
- Can feel at home at an organization that prioritizes people, integrity, and inclusion over the bottom line.



Show that you're a desirable employer by prominently stating the benefits you offer that support work-life balance and career opportunities, especially:

- Stability with flexibility
- Stepping stones to build a career
- Benefits

(See a good example of a [Careers page](#) from Ohio Living.)



Don't lead with your organization's history, expansion plans, or news about the organization. Place that information secondary to the messages about people.

TIPS BY COMMUNICATIONS CHANNEL

Publications and Website Content

Indicate in the masthead/Intro/About your nonprofit and/or faith-based status and your commitment to quality care and services. State that you are mission-driven.

Write about people. Publish stories about the bonds between residents/clients and your team members and how residents/clients remain active and keep contributing. Use their own words and real photos.

Careers Page

Make sure the online application is streamlined and user-friendly.

Social Media

Do you have a video—maybe featuring caregivers, other employees, or clients? Pin it at the top of your newsfeed (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube).

Infuse a range of your employees in your news feeds. Show how they:

- Advance in their careers
- Bond with the older adults (and others) at your organization
- Deliver quality care
- Find meaning and purpose in their work

Invite your employees to post about their jobs on their social media channels.