



Seniority Vision

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The initial vision for Seniority sprang from a simple idea: the sales and marketing services of American Baptist Homes of the West had great value. These services were so valuable, in fact, that other organizations would pay for them.

The problem? ABHOW would jeopardize its tax-exempt status if it engaged in fee-for-service consulting. However, if ABHOW could create a subsidiary firm to serve its own communities as well as new clients, its tax exemption would be protected and the organization would achieve a double-bottom line: the expansion of its mission and the creation of new revenue to sustain the mission.

In science and technology, they call such solutions “elegant.” I call it beautiful.

Nearly a decade has passed since that first vision. Seniority, Inc. has grown into one of the nation’s most respected management, sales and marketing firms serving the senior living industry. Along the way, we made ABHOW better. Every year we achieved ABHOW’s entrance fee goal. Entrance fee revenues exceeded budget by \$23.6 million between 1996-2005. We extended ABHOW’s mission across the country by helping other nonprofits and for-profit firms enhance the independence, well-being and security of older people. And we returned home with new ideas for products and systems that strengthened the company.

The beauty of Seniority has been to take the best of ABHOW, to share it and expand it, all to fulfill and sustain the mission.

So what is our vision for the next decade?

First and foremost, we will continue to serve ABHOW. Seniority is ABHOW. We are a wholly owned subsidiary of ABHOW. We value ABHOW’s heritage, and we seek to embody the company’s core ethical principles.

Seniority personnel have some of the longest tenures in ABHOW. We are grateful that this organization affords us the chance to pursue such meaningful work. And so our first commitment is to ensure that ABHOW receives our finest services. We fulfill this commitment by giving great attention to the particular needs and opportunities of ABHOW communities.

But there is another way we fulfill this commitment: by working with communities and organizations beyond ABHOW. Our contracts generate revenue for ABHOW while protecting ABHOW’s tax-exempt status. We develop programs for clients, such as MarginMagic, at minimal cost yet great value to ABHOW communities. Because clients across the country share the cost of our labor, we provide exceptional *and* affordable services to ABHOW communities. In fact, sales and marketing fees have not substantially increased for ABHOW overall in 14 years. We are the best deal in town!



We head out into the senior living landscape as scouts for ABHOW, exploring new paths for the delivery of ABHOW's mission. What we discover is of great value to the organization. We take the best practices of third-party clients and incorporate them into ABHOW. We bring new knowledge into the ABHOW system about emerging products, such as equity-based communities, and innovative approaches, such as phased development and team conflict resolution.

In many respects, we are the company's R&D department – exploring, tinkering, inventing. This work is essential to the growth of ABHOW. We are, for instance, helping ABHOW define its relationship to the Middle Tier – that market whose needs and income lie somewhere between affordable housing and continuing care. Through the development and management of multilevel rental retirement communities like Cedar Creek in Madera, Calif., we create products and services that enable ABHOW to serve another segment of the senior population. So as an arm of ABHOW that pursues new possibilities, we give the organization greater reach. In this next decade, we aim to reach far.

Today, we are starting to get the “crème” of referrals. Banks and investment firms are looking to Seniority for help with startup developments and crisis situations. They call us or commend us to their clients because we are known for our ability to implement systems that lead to success.

My vision is to build on this reputation: to cultivate these referral sources, to leverage the confidence others place in us in order to grow both our management business and our sales and marketing contracts.

We will concentrate on developing management agreements in the West. We want to take advantage of ABHOW's reputation as a pioneering retirement living leader in the West. This is terrain we know well. We also understand the practical value of having management resources close at hand. The proximity of management contracts will enable us to share skills and costs, and support our efforts to scale the business.

In sales and marketing, we will continue to develop contracts nationally, focusing primarily on pre-sales engagements. Our recent success at Holly Creek and The Sound View Apartment Homes at Judson Park opens opportunities to provide pre-sales support elsewhere. In our knowledge bank we now have proven methods vital to the launch of new products. This knowledge is a valuable asset.

Throughout our contracts, we want the focus to be on partnership. We're not in it for the short term. We recognize that our systems take time to implement, that our methods require disciplined engagement day in and day out for months, even years. So while we often make recommendations that should be implemented immediately, we must also educate our clients to their long-term needs and cultivate a “gerontological patience.” The long view is essential in this business of aging.



Fundamentally, we are partners for life and growth – personally, professionally, and organizationally. We want our clients to regard us as essential members of their teams who are committed to the long haul, colleagues who can be counted on year after year.

As long-term partners, training is at the heart of our work. We continually seek to strengthen our own capacity and the skills of our clients. We offer more than 60 sales training modules. We will continue to refine these tools to meet present needs, and we will look for opportunities to capitalize on the value of our training expertise and methodologies.

Our Annual National Sales Conference will continue. Over the next few years, I hope our conference becomes a must-attend event for senior living professionals – providing critical education for clients and an entrée to Seniority for prospects.

I see us providing to every client an annual program of personalized training for sales techniques. And I see us making use of advances in technology to offer web-based training for REPS and MarginMagic.

The discipline of training means we regard ourselves as a learning organization. If we are good scouts for ABHOW, then we are constantly gathering new data, taking note of trends, looking ahead for signs of change, and feeding this information back into the system. What makes us valuable consultants is not our certainty but our curiosity.

Our learning leads to “practical innovation,” which is a way of describing advances that can be implemented in any community. By being curious, by closely observing our clients and our processes, we’re able to make modifications that may, for instance, turn around a troubled community, transition dining to an efficient and elegant experience, or transform CNAs and receptionists into marketing pros.

Moreover, “practical innovation” defines a way of engagement for us. It’s a non-linear way of being consultants and managers: we notice, we tinker, we communicate. We constantly cycle through these stages. That’s why you will always hear me preach the power of systems, which provide sets of practices that guide, chart, and communicate our progress toward success.

In the next few years, I see us becoming more adept at moving around this circle, more confident in the efficacy of our approach, and more invitational to others: we want folks to learn with us.

That means we will have to redouble our efforts to document our steps and to communicate with our clients. Sales and marketing directors will provide monthly summary reports to executive directors along with frequent direct communication. Beginning this year, we will convene annual community marketing strategy meetings. At the corporate level, my promise is to ensure that senior ABHOW leaders are never without the information to measure the success of our management agreements or our sales and marketing contracts. So that means we, as a Seniority team, must become even better communicators with each other.



I imagine a company that compels people to say, “Those Seniority folks sure know how to talk to each other!”

I imagine a company that has access to the latest data because we are so diligent about documentation.

I imagine a company that is so good at communicating – appropriately, timely, and honestly – that our clients are never surprised.

Finally, I imagine a company where the employees are thrilled to be engaged in the work. I see a company in which our excitement and exceptional service so overwhelms our clients that they cannot stop talking about the value of our firm. I imagine a company that fosters raving employees and raving clients. Is there a more beautiful picture of our future?

This is my vision for Seniority. It springs from my deep respect for the people of this company and my belief in our potential. Ultimately, the vision will be shaped by all of us, by our commitments. And those commitments will be sustained by what we value.

So here is what I value:

I care about the mission and the purpose of ABHOW and Seniority.

I care about seniors. I believe we enrich the lives of older adults by offering them the opportunity to move into our communities, and I believe we ensure their quality of life by providing exceptional management services.

I care about family. I look across ABHOW and Seniority and see people who care for each other: our resident communities, employees, corporate teams – we all comprise a family. And being family is where “the magic” happens. I have often said: “Family is when we care about each other, we laugh, we cry (hopefully more tears of joy than not) and we eat a lot of cake along the way”.

I care about building a business with quality products and strong systems. I value using best practices that increase our productivity in order to maximize the time to be face to face with our residents, employees and families.

I care about making a difference. My personal mission in life is service, and my desire is to serve in a manner that embodies these values.

The beauty of Seniority is that here I have such an opportunity, every day. And so do you.