

9. Top ten tips for improving consultation

1. **Recognise the power of the resident's voice** – you can improve the level of customer satisfaction by increasing the number of opportunities provided for residents to have their say. People will talk anyway, so you may as well know what they are saying.

I have increased the number of opportunities from...

2. **Your best advertisement** – management often pay more attention to getting new customers rather than maintaining existing ones. If you get it right, your existing residents will 'advertise' your village and the local facilities they enjoy. How likely is it that your residents would recommend your village to a friend?

I have increased the number of residents I have asked about what they think of life in the village from...

3. **Make consultation a habit** – create an expectation that residents will be consulted. You should aim for residents to say with confidence that they are consulted about matters to do with their life in the village and that their opinions are valued.

I have increased the number of consultations I have had with residents from...

4. **Keep in touch with your residents by:**

- > organising morning teas, now and again, to meet residents for an informal get-together and chat;
- > providing a monthly newsletter that includes a Manager's Report on items that are important for residents to know;
- > holding special meetings when you need to seek residents' views on a specific topic rather than hijacking a regular meeting.

I have increased the variety of ways that I communicate with residents from...

5. **Aim for dedicated Q&A sessions** – on a regular, planned basis e.g. quarterly, so that residents know that there are regular opportunities when they can have their say, seek information or raise concerns.

I have increased the number of pre-determined dates set for meetings from...

6. **Solicit residents' views** – actively ask for residents' views. Actively seek feedback at different parts of the cycle. If residents have a right to express their views about their life in their village then the operator should take responsibility to find out what those views are.

I have actively sought the views of residents by...

7. **Embrace positive and negative feedback** – you will learn from it. Take all feedback on board, both positive and negative. Have a complaints mechanism that works, that will decrease the likelihood of disputes. Don't dodge complaints – they can provide the most useful information about how well the village is performing.

I have increased the amount of feedback I have received from...

8. **Consider what matters most to residents** – find out what aspects of life in the village are most important to the residents and then measure how well these are achieved.

I have increased my awareness of aspects of village life that are important to residents from...

9. **Consult before making changes** – you must consult about any proposed changes that could have a significant impact on residents' financial affairs, the amenity of the village or residents' way of life. It is best to do it before the decision is finalised, otherwise it is not consultation, merely information provision. Residents will respect management for it.

I have increased the number of times I consult with residents, before making a change, from...

10. **Take action** – on insights you have gained. By doing so you will increase residents' confidence in the management team of their village, thereby increasing consumer satisfaction.

I have increased the number of instances that I have acted upon from...

See also: '*2. Consultation with residents' information sheet*

For more information:

**Office for Ageing Well
Retirement Villages Unit**

9.00am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday on business days.

T: 08 8204 2420

E: retirementvillages@sa.gov.au

www.sa.gov.au/seniors/retirementvillages



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