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# Marketing Objectives And Strategy—Set Your Coordinates

This chapter reveals the formula for obtaining your occupancy goal. Here you will learn how to calculate the marketing plan's lead and sales objectives. You'll also be introduced to marketing strategies that define how aggressive your program needs to be to achieve those objectives. The plan's objectives and strategy are the axis of your marketing program—its coordinates, so to speak. A coordinate is a set of numbers that together describe the exact position of a target. Your target is full occupancy.

Heads up—this critical marketing component is full of valuable planning information and much of it is communicated in math. If you want to be a strategic-minded marketer, you need solid skills in arithmetic and problem solving along with a good dose of common sense. It's the science of marketing, not the art, that separates the marketing heavyweights from the lightweights. Let's be honest: Any thinking individual can provide a prospect tour or paste together a print ad. But do these intermittent and elementary activities influence your occupancy? The answer is no, they don't.

Smart marketing is about asking and obtaining the answers to fundamental objective-setting and planning questions and then using that information to chart your plan's course. Your quest for answers involves delving into all the elements that drive your occupancy: move-ins and attrition, quantity and quality of leads and sales, sources of leads and sales, and your close rate. If you're not clear on the meaning of these terms, sit tight, you will be in a moment. Marketing consultants often refer to this assessment as a "marketing audit." The audit analyzes all the forces and factors that make your marketing world go-round. Without this information, you end up with marketing happenstance, not calculated circumstance. If you're not sold on the idea of another analysis, consider these benefits. A marketing audit:

**Renders the figures you need to formulate quantifiable objectives.** A true and correct objective isn't stated in subjective terms like "increase occupancy" or "build market awareness." An objective is a measurable action path—complete with numbers.

**Shapes the intensity and direction of your marketing plan and program.** What is your occupancy goal? Is your current marketing program generating enough leads and sales to achieve that goal? If not, how many more leads and sales does the program need? The answers to these questions dictate the marketing program's aggressiveness. You'll have the facts to work up the best blend of staffing, networking, and advertising tactics to reach your target market and to achieve your target occupancy.

**Makes it easy to ascertain if your program is off-track, where it's off-track, and how to put it back on track.** For example, are you making the most of your current leads or are they going by the wayside because of poor sales practices? Are your advertising efforts reaching the right places and speaking to the right people? If you're seeking more sales, do you need to accelerate your advertising efforts to build your lead base, or increase your close rate and nail a greater percentage of your present leads?

**Translates move-in, attrition, lead, and sales data into actionable information.** When you perform a marketing audit you're "data mining"—a fancy phrase for toiling over figures to extract hidden facts. These facts are used to set your objectives and for big-picture program trending and troubleshooting.

## The Occupancy Principle

Marketing can seem like a complex maze, but you can eliminate its mystery with the use of some simple math that is founded on one guiding principle:

### The Occupancy Principle

Leads generate sales,  
Sales generate move-ins,  
Move-ins (minus attrition) result in occupancy