

Best Practices In **ONLINE** REPUTATION Management

FEATURING



Interview with Stephanie L. Williams,
President, Bozzuto Management Company



The Bozzuto Group manages 51 properties in the 2017 Elite 1% ORA™ Power Ranking. The Kensington, has bagged the number one award for three consecutive years including 2017.

Stephanie L. Williams, President of Bozzuto Management Company, oversees an apartment portfolio of more than 60,000 units across 215 properties.

Q Bozzuto has 51 properties in the 2017 Elite 1% ORA™ Power Ranking of properties by online reputation for the year 2017. The Kensington has bagged the number one award for three consecutive years including 2017. What do you attribute your success in online reputation to?

A. | Our online reputation is directly related to the reputation we have built offline. When we create a lifestyle for our residents that reflects our core values and supports our passion for service, we by default, nurture fans that want to share their perspective on our brand with others.

We understand how valuable “home” is, how picking up and moving your life is such an important decision. Because of this, we take great pride in providing meaningful sanctuaries for our residents. This is what ensures our success through all channels (offline and online).

Q How do you respond to online reviews? And, who responds to reviews - is it an internal or external team?

A. | The answer is “both”. We have a united front to ensure that all commentary (online and offline) is responded to accurately and appropriately. The good and the bad. The sooner the better. It shows we care.

Q What is Bozzuto’s strategy to manage its online goodwill and how important is it in your overall marketing efforts?

A. | Marketing plays an important role in our dialogue with current and future residents. We really see marketing as a way to proactively “communicate” and continuously set expectations in a manner that is purposeful and relevant. The role of marketing is very much intertwined with the operations of our business—its function is not to simply generate leads, but to carry on the relationship that we initially built throughout the resident’s stay with us. Hence, renewal is even more valuable than a new lease. Our marketing is meant to serve our audiences’ needs, and we often use our online reputation to give future residents an authentic look into what living at our communities is really like.

Q How does Bozzuto use ORA™ internally to evaluate the performance of its portfolio?

A. | We use a number of vehicles and metrics to manage our reputation both online and offline. ORA™ provides a valuable metric to continually evaluate our reputation and the impact that our reputation has for those searching for a new place to live. It also allows us to evaluate our performance on both micro and macro perspectives. This is a metric we can use as a telltale for performance and a leading indicator for sales efficiency.

Q How do you train and educate your employees – the property management teams to aid in achieving your online reputation management goals?

A. | We start with our hiring process. Since our reputation is earned through the everyday experience we provide, we ensure that we hire people who will best represent our brand every day. This means they shared our brand’s values and use them to govern their decision-making as they serve our customers.

Training is, of course, another aspect to ensure the appropriate tools are in place to help them be successful. And, metrics play a critical role in our reputation-management goals. You can’t improve what you don’t measure.

Q How do you use social media to interact with residents and prospects and which platforms do you use the most?

A. | Our residents span all demographics so we always use a wide variety of social media channels to communicate with both our prospects and residents. Because of this, the value of these channels are often circumstantial due to the nature of their use. We use Snapchat much differently than we do Instagram or Facebook. Essentially, we have found that there is a natural approach to social media that fits the occasion and permanence of the communication.

🎯 What strategies do you use at the grassroots level to encourage and manage online reviews from residents and prospects?

A. | We have a very simple approach to this that can be summed up in a philosophy: meaningful service (experiences) is what produces a valued reputation.

Over time, this builds legacy. We don't believe in taking short-cuts such as gamification or indirect incentives to convince our residents to write nice things about us. We do believe in ensuring they have as many access points to us on-site at the community and among our leadership as possible. The more we ask about their experience the more we can deliver valued experiences. It's that simple.

Because of this, we are highly available. We ask our residents what they think (online and offline). We have 24-7 online channels, like BozzutoListens.com, for them to provide us with both critical thoughts and accolades. The long and the short of it: we have built a culture here that promotes proactive dialogue and honesty with our residents.

