



## Open Letter to HSV Board – Marketing

### Description

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By **Lloyd Sherman**, February 1, 2020 – Published February 3, 2020

I'm pretty sure that seeing this document coming at you has already evoked a comment from board members, saying, "Here is that chronic complainer Lloyd Sherman again," To which I could only respond: "That is probably true for anyone who doesn't want to listen to property owners, those who don't want to hear or accept the truth, or those whose minds are simply closed."

My input today is followed by a **Plea** to you that deals only with Marketing of the Village. I support that we should market this wonderful place we have chosen to call home. But I often wonder why we appear to make it so difficult, especially since the introduction of the CMP. The POA/BOD seems hell-bent on changing what the Village has been for the last 50 years. We are an active lifestyle community primarily composed of retirees. Period! We are not a resort destination. However, we are a destination that some come to on vacation. We need long-term residents to sustain what we have. So, why do we continue to see documents that have a component in them attempting to determine who our target market is? How much more strategic input do we need before a **MARKETING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN** gets put in place. This is not rocket science.

We recently have confirmation that yet another committee, which had done thorough and complete work and documentation, had their report intentionally withheld from the Board. Why so? Was there something in this report untrue? NO! So, you have to ask yourself, why the intentional deception. I hate to say it, but if you know the information is available, and you are not demanding to see it, that is simply shirking your responsibility as a Board member.

In the last six or eight months we have added a CMEO who we were told was bringing marketing DNA to the table. Then a Marketing Manager was hired. Now a proposal has been suggested for the SELLS Agency to add another expense of \$84K annually for what appears to be more 'strategic planning'. I could see an agency providing support by training resources within the POA staff on how to actually do marketing if that doesn't currently exist. Providing more 'strategic planning' is just a waste

of money.

An organization of our size and type should be spending somewhere between 5-8% of their revenue budget on marketing. The Marketing Sub-committee was aware that what we have been doing isn't working and the money we have been spending was basically pouring money into a bottomless pit. The results should have been a clear enough message, but apparently not. We are spending only between 1-2%, depending on what you decide to include or exclude. While we probably need to spend more, it needs to be spent **wisely and effectively**.

We cannot keep sugar-coating the reality that significant changes are required in the way we operate. Today I am imploring the Board to take their leadership role seriously and get this ineffective marketing campaign on the right track. **My Plea To You today: Do not allow another long-term contract to be let for marketing (or any other purpose) without knowing specifically how it is going to improve our revenues.** If you decide to allow SELLS the opportunity to show us what they can do, give them a six-month contract that is renewable under measurable benchmarks. We should not accept any target less than a 4-5% growth in revenues as a result of any marketing efforts expended. If they can't provide those kinds of growth rates, then why are we engaging them?

I have personally discussed the pending proposal with several veteran marketing people. Their concern is that this firm does not have the necessary skills to accomplish what needs to be done. Print media is all but dead and digital marketing is the wave that will carry us into the future. We do not see anything of significance exhibited in their proposal other than a mere mention about digital.

**We need implementation; not strategy.**

Our target market is **RETIREES** (especially those who play GOLF) **and MILITARY**. Address all the amenities we have in our marketing efforts, but target those potential new buyers who will use our number one revenue amenity, **GOLF**. Failure to do this will result in golf revenues continuing to decline.

Sincerely,  
[Lloyd Sherman](#)

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