Senior Living Advisory Board
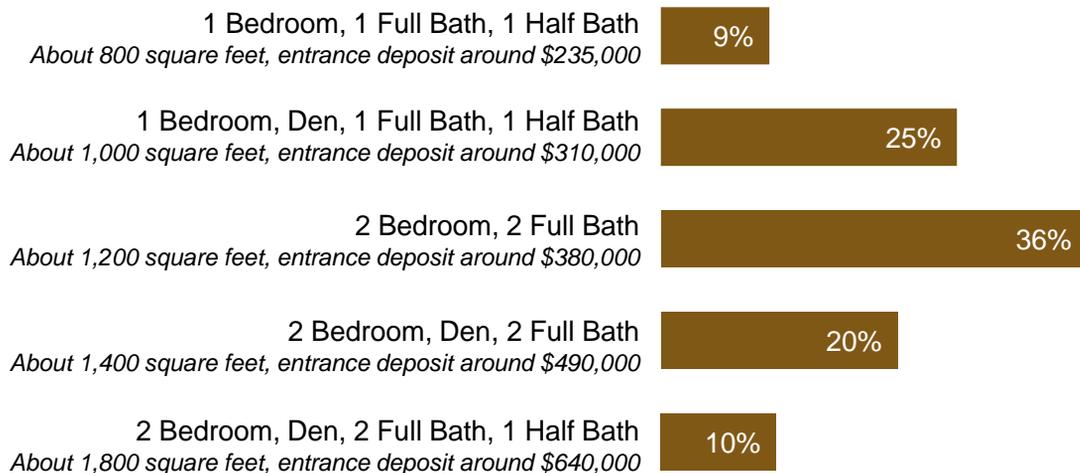
Autumn Newsletter

September 2018

Apartment Homes

In our most recent survey we asked what future senior living residents are looking for in an apartment home at a senior living community.

Apartment Size

Most Senior Living Advisory Board panelists say they'd select a midsize apartment. The most popular option among the five presented in the survey is a 1,200-square-foot, 2-bedroom, 2-bath apartment.

Apartment Choice

1 Bedroom, 1 Full Bath, 1 Half Bath
About 800 square feet, entrance deposit around $235,000
9%

1 Bedroom, Den, 1 Full Bath, 1 Half Bath
About 1,000 square feet, entrance deposit around $310,000
25%

2 Bedroom, 2 Full Bath
About 1,200 square feet, entrance deposit around $380,000
36%

2 Bedroom, Den, 2 Full Bath
About 1,400 square feet, entrance deposit around $490,000
20%

2 Bedroom, Den, 2 Full Bath, 1 Half Bath
About 1,800 square feet, entrance deposit around $640,000
10%

NOTES:
Prices are for research purposes only and assume a 90% refund
Graph excludes 13% who select none of the above

Apartment Layout and Amenities

Most prospects (72%) would prefer an open floor plan in which the kitchen is open to the dining and living areas. They say the open layout makes a space feel bigger and allows a host to interact with guests while cooking.

In two-bedroom apartments, the majority (70%) say they'd prefer the bedrooms be on opposite sides of the living room, citing a need for privacy and quiet in the master bedroom.

Almost all (87%) say having outdoor apartment space is important to them; half consider it essential. Screened porches are the most popular option, followed by balconies.

Kitchen Features and Finishes

The majority of prospects (65%) say they want stainless steel appliances; many specify that they'd prefer fingerprint-free stainless steel. The next most popular option is white, with only 19%.
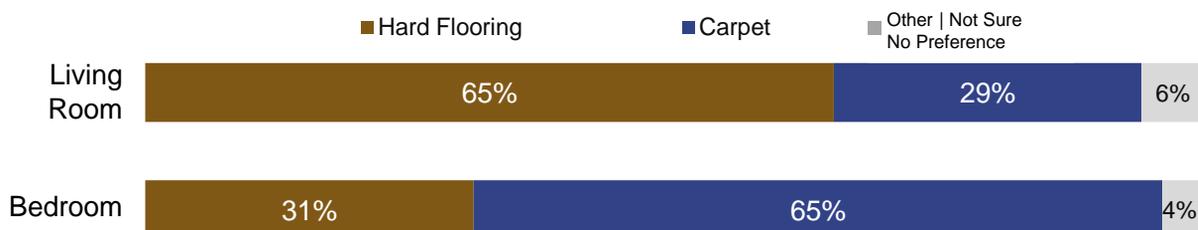
There is less consistency regarding countertops. Just under half (45%) would prefer granite countertops and a third (32%) want quartz. The rest are not sure or say they do not have a preference.

Living Room and Bedroom Flooring

Most panelists say they would choose hard flooring—such as hardwood or wood-look vinyl plank—in the living and dining areas of a senior living apartment. Less than a third would opt for carpet.

The reverse is true for the bedroom. Twice as many would opt for carpet in the bedroom than hard flooring.

Flooring in Living Rooms and Bedrooms

■ Hard Flooring　　■ Carpet　　▫ Other | Not Sure No Preference

	Hard Flooring	Carpet	Other / Not Sure / No Preference
Living Room	65%	29%	6%
Bedroom	31%	65%	4%

Technology

Earlier this summer we asked panelists about technology—what devices they own, how they use them, and what they'd be looking for in terms of technology at a senior living community.

Device Ownership

Almost all Senior Living Advisory Board panelists own a desktop or laptop computer, and two-thirds own a tablet computer such as an iPad.

Seventy-nine percent of panelists have a smartphone, more than twice as many as when we last asked this question in 2014.

Device Ownership	
Desktop or laptop computer	97%
Smartphone	79%
Tablet computer	65%
E-reader	44%
Fitness tracker	24%
Smart speaker	18%
Smart watch	9%

Online Activity

Almost all panelists report that they regularly send and receive email, search the Web, purchase products, and follow the news online. Somewhat fewer research products and services and manage their finances.

Two-thirds say they use patient portals to make appointments, ask questions, or retrieve test results from a health care provider.

Six in ten say they use social media, primarily Facebook. Women use social media at higher rates than men.

Regular Online Activity	
Send and receive email	98%
Browse/Search the Internet	96%
Purchase products	94%
Follow the news	85%
Research products or services	74%
Do online banking, pay bills, manage finances	73%
Correspond with health care providers through a patient portal	66%
Use social media	59%

Technology at Senior Living Communities

Six in ten panelists (59%) say they would prefer a technologically advanced senior living community where residents can do everything online if they choose to. Four in ten (41%) would choose a community where residents can do some things online but where most things—especially things having to do with health care and finances—are handled face-to-face or on the phone.

When asked to explain their preferences, those who prefer a technologically advanced community cite ease, convenience, and efficiency. Some also note that they currently handle most of their affairs online and would not want to "go backwards" when they move to senior living.

Technology at Senior Living Communities

I'd prefer a senior living community…

…that is very technologically advanced, so residents can do everything online if they want.	…where you can do some things online, but where most things, especially things having to do with health care and finances, are handled in person.
59%	41%

Those who would opt for a less technologically advanced senior living community raise concerns about data security. Some say they are not comfortable with technology and would feel unwelcome at a community that relied too much on technology. Still others say that while they are able to use technology now, they worry about being able to do so in the future.

Whether they would prefer a technologically advanced community or not, all agree that choice is vital. There should always be the option to speak with a person.

"As I get older, I may lose my vision and not be able to see to use the computer. Also other health reasons my prevent me from use technology. Technology use should not be mandatory, especially as we get older and our lifestyles change. One reason why I would like to move to a senior living community is so I can get help when I need it and without having to use the computer to get the help."

"The key phrase is 'if they want.' I want to have the option of talking to a human if I feel my situation requires asking questions to determine how to best proceed. I do not want to only work with a computer."

When asked what they'd like to be able to do online at a senior living community, the most important things are being able to learn about and see schedules for activities and events (92% say this is important); view their meal plan balance (88%); access their medical records, test results, and other health information (84%); and pay their monthly service package (74%).

Other suggestions include being able to communicate with other residents through group chats or online message boards and having an online resident and staff directory.

Panelists also stress the need to have experts on staff to help keep things running smoothly and to help residents as needed. As one panelist explained, "One of the most frustrating things my husband and I experience involves IT-related issues, whether it's hooking up a new printer or scanning documents. An on-site, full-time IT support person who has patience and extensive knowledge, who can tutor one-on-one as well as provide classes, would truly be an asset to a community."

Senior Living Community Websites

Earlier this year, we asked panelists about senior living communities' sales and marketing websites.

Most have turned to the websites of the communities they are considering in their research and shopping process; over a third say this is a major source. A quarter have not.

When visiting sites, panelists expect to find details about the apartment homes—including prices, photos, and floor plans—and lists of community amenities, activities, and services.

Communities' Websites as an Information Source

74%

37% Major Source

26% Not a Source

37% Minor Source
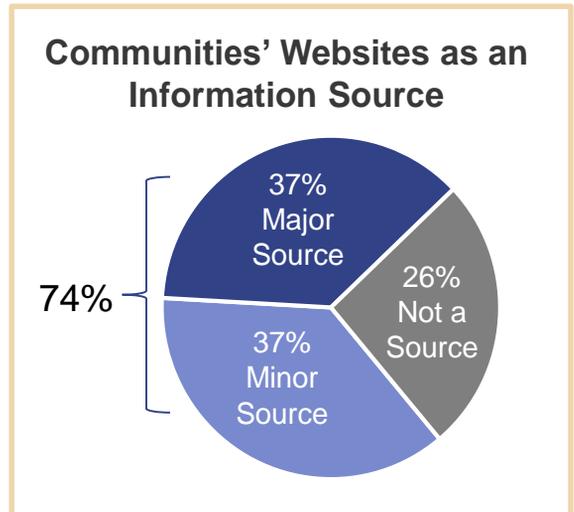
Shaping the Future of Senior Living

The **Senior Living Advisory Board** [®] is an online research panel of people age 50 and better who are considering a move to a senior living community in the future. The panel includes customers at every stage of consideration, from those who are just starting to explore their options to those who plan to move soon.

By sharing their ideas and insights in periodic surveys, the members of the Senior Living Advisory Board help Erickson Living[®] develop the best possible communities for our current and future residents.