



When You've Decided to Start a Cohousing Community: Top 20 Things You Can Do To Spread the Word

1. Tell absolutely EVERYONE you know about your cohousing venture. Even if the person you are talking to is not interested, he or she may know someone who is. The **OVERWHELMING** majority of people who come into cohousing come through a personal contact.
2. When you have some money, or if you are willing to invest some money, put a small classified ad in local community newspapers. It's more important to have an ad that runs regularly than a large splashy ad that runs only once or twice.
3. Make an announcement about your community forming on the Cohousing-L, an electronic list service for cohousing. Many people looking for community subscribe to this list. You may make some good contacts through this medium. Subscribe to the list through The CohoUS website: www.cohousing.org.
4. One of the easiest, most effective and *fun* tools for marketing is a T-Shirt. A T-shirt also helps build a sense of belonging among members of the group that's forming. Even if you don't have a name for your community, there are some

wonderful generic cohousing T-shirts. Wear your T-shirts to cohousing functions.

5. Wear your T-shirt to functions other than cohousing.
6. If you have the talent in your group, or someone who wants to learn how to do it, a website is the least expensive and the second most effective marketing tool you can have. (See #1 above for the best marketing tool.) It's also fun. People looking for community are generally people who see the internet as a tool to help forge community and they use it! A website works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
7. As soon as you are able, create or invest in a cohousing slide show or power point presentation. Until you have your own site and/or have slides of built communities, a generic slide show works just fine as it's the *principles* of cohousing you want to educate people about not necessarily any one particular community. (Except your own of course!) The CoHousing Company has produced a very good slide show complete w/ text. Write or call The CoHousing Company, # 113, 1250 Addison Street, Berkeley CA 94702. 510 549 9980. Kraus-Fitch Architects offers a free power point presentation called "What is Cohousing?" 413-549-5799; email Mary Kraus mkraus@krausfitch.com
8. Once you have a slide show or power point presentation, take it on the road. Do you belong to a church group, PTA, or civic association? Often groups like these look for interesting

meeting topics for their members. Get as many speaking engagements as you can.

9. Create an attractive flyer announcing the formation of your community for distribution at meetings, fairs, festivals.

10. Set a regular time to meet with people interested in building your community. Ideally, this should be a social occasion such as a potluck. If it's a "business" meeting include a social function. What you are doing is building a prospect base of people who may, if not right away, join later.

11. Keep a clean, current up-to-date list of all people who express interest in your community.

12. Create or purchase "Ask Me About Cohousing" buttons. Like the T-shirts, these buttons will open conversations for you to talk about your community. Almost everyone will ask "So what is cohousing?"

15. Keep literature about your community with you always -- even in grocery lines people will strike up a conversation if they see a button or T-shirt. If you don't have literature specific to your community, there is information in abundance available from CohoUS.

16. Create & put a cohousing bumper sticker on your car. Or, order a bumper sticker from CohoUS (www.cohousing.org).

17. Listen to talk radio. When the topic is about housing, community, neighborhoods, urban, suburban, or rural communities, or any related topic, call in and talk about cohousing and your cohousing community. Like the editorial pages, this medium is highly underutilized.
18. Write a press release about your plans for building a cohousing community and send it to talk radio shows that serve your community. Local talk radio shows are always looking for new material. Be sure to follow up with the news or program editor!
19. Write letters to the editor in response to articles you read in newspapers and other print media about community, families, childcare, seniors, singles, single parents, urban sprawl, etc. The Editorial page of the newspaper or periodical is the most underutilized page in the paper. This will get your name around.
20. **Join CohoUS and/or a regional group.** These are non-profit organizations that specializes in helping groups create cohousing communities.

Note: Mid-Atlantic Cohousing is organized to help groups with the educational and informational tasks involved in teaching people about cohousing. There are several other regional groups as well. Get involved with your regional chapter and the national organization. We have lots of experience and we are eager to help you.
[\(http://www.MidAtlanticCohousing.org\)](http://www.MidAtlanticCohousing.org)