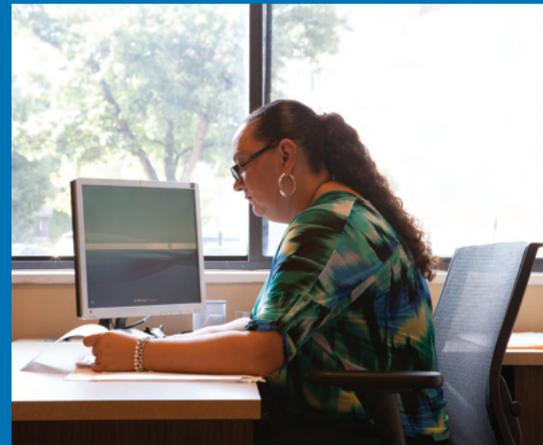


# #2 MARKETING AND MAINTAINING YOUR COMMUNITY

## Instructor Guide



January 2021



## **LIMITS OF LIABILITY AND DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY**

© 2021 by the National Apartment Association, 4300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800 Arlington, VA 22203. All rights reserved. The course materials or any part thereof may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the National Apartment Association Education Institute (NAAEI).

NAA retains copyright to the original materials and to any translation to other languages and any audio or video reproduction, or other electronic means, including reproductions authorized to accommodate individual requests based on religious or medical deferments from classroom participation.

## **DISCLAIMERS**

Although NAAEI programs provide general information on apartment management practices, NAAEI does not guarantee the information offered in its programs is applicable in all jurisdictions or that programs contain a complete statement of all information essential to proper apartment management in a given area. NAAEI, therefore, encourages attendees to seek competent professional advice with respect to specific problems that may arise. NAAEI, their instructors, agents and employees assume no responsibility or liability for the consequences of an attendee's reliance on and application of program contents or materials in specific situations. Though some of the information used in scenarios and examples may resemble true circumstances, the details are fictitious. Any similarity to real properties is purely coincidental. Forms, documents and other exhibits in the course books are samples only; NAAEI does not necessarily endorse their use. Because of varying state and local laws and company policies, competent advice should be sought in the use of any form, document, or exhibit.

## **POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING THE USE OF RECORDING DEVICES, AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT AND OTHER MEANS OF REPRODUCTION OR RECORDING OF THE “NATIONAL APARTMENT LEASING PROFESSIONAL” MATERIALS**

All program contents and materials are the property of the National Apartment Association Education Institute, which strictly prohibits reproduction of program contents or materials in any form without the prior written consent. Except as expressly authorized in writing in advance, no video or audio recording of NAAEI programs or photocopying of “National Apartment Leasing Professional” materials is permitted. Authorized recording of programs or duplication of materials may be done only by the instructor on site.

# Acknowledgments

## SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

The NAA Education Institute wishes to thank the many apartment industry professionals who contributed their time and expertise to the rewrite of the Certified Apartment Leasing Professional course.

### Lead Subject Matter Expert

**Susan E. Weston**, CAM, CAPS, NAAEI Faculty

Licensed Texas Broker

**The Susan Weston Company**

972-308-6092 Office

972-415-6299 Cell

[susan@susanweston.com](mailto:susan@susanweston.com)

### CALP

**Certified Apartment Leasing Professional**

**NAA Education Institute**

**4300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800**

**Arlington, VA 22203**

**833-86-MYNAA**

**[education@naahq.org](mailto:education@naahq.org)**

**[naahq.org](http://naahq.org)**

## Further Acknowledgments

The National Apartment Association Education Institute acknowledges the contributions of countless volunteers who made this program possible. We extend our thanks to all and pledge to maintain the CALP credential as the premier standard apartment industry training program for all Leasing Professionals.



## Just for Instructors

The National Apartment Association Education Institute thanks you for your time, talent and expertise in training and developing the next generation of Leasing Professionals.

Whether you are a subject matter expert, a seasoned instructor or new to training, this guide will help you become an even more engaging and effective instructor.

The Certified Apartment Leasing Professional (CALP) program is designed to teach leasing skills to multifamily residential management professionals. It has been recently enhanced to reflect the changing dynamic of techniques, technology and sales demanded by the responsibilities of this position.

This course is targeted for people with at least six months of leasing experience.

For more information about this program or any of NAAEI's education programs, contact your local apartment association or contact NAAEI at **833-86-MYNAA** or **education@naahq.org**.

## Using this Guide

This Instructor Guide is identical to the Participant Guide that your class participants have, with the following exceptions:

- The Course Schedule page for instructors provides suggested timing for each component of each module. The participants' version shows only the timing for each module.
- In the left-hand margins of this guide, you'll see a Slide icon [  ], which tells you what slide to show at that point in the course.
- Also in the left-hand margins, you will occasionally see an “instructor’s note” to suggest something you might want to do, particularly during the suggested Activities.
- This guide includes answers to all questions that the participants will be asked in this course.

Other than the above, the participant and instructor guides are identical and all page numbers are the same for you as they are for the participants.

# Preparing to Teach the Course

To give course participants a first-rate learning experience, plan to spend several hours preparing to teach this class.

## When to Prepare

Depending on your experience with this course, begin preparing one to two weeks before the scheduled course date. That is enough time to absorb the material without feeling rushed.

## How to Prepare

- **Read the Participant's Guide carefully.** Material matches your Instructor Guide, but look for occasions when the students will need to write down slide content or answers. Plan to allow extra time as you present. Note how Participant Guide page numbers align with Instructor Guide numbers.
- **Review the Course Table of Contents.** See yourself as a guide. Knowing and recalling the entire course outline will help you to help students understand where they are in the program.
- **Read the Instructor's Guide carefully.** Get familiar with the organization and flow of the course, as well as the content itself.
- **Mark up this guide.** Write notes throughout. Highlight passages you want to emphasize. Add prompts for your examples and explanations.
- **Practice.** Do a dry run of the material (or at least some of it) in front of willing colleagues or family members. Get their feedback. Find out: What are you doing well? What is one thing you could improve?
- **Preview and practice the PowerPoint slides and videos.**

## When it is Time to Teach the Course

- **Do not Read the Slides.** Students have copies of the slides in their handouts. Slide content typically paraphrases what is in the text. Reading it is not helpful and actually might bore your students! Paraphrase or simply refer to the slide.
- **Do not have Students read from the Text.** Not only are students uncomfortable with this but it turns the text into the presentation, instead of your comments and student discussion. Again, retention and engagement plummet!

- **Link Module to Module.** Help the student move from one topic within a course to another. Students like to know where they are in the program and how the subject you are just finishing relates to the next area of learning. Use a simple connector like, “So now that we have learned the basics of the relationship sales process, let’s move to applying this process in real situations.”
- **Use this guide.** Refer to it often to keep the class on track. Using notes will make you look natural, relaxed and even confident.
- **Approach the course as a conversation, not as a presentation.** Keep things open and easygoing. Pick yourself up if you make a “mistake.” Answer the questions you can. Most important, avoid the temptation to be the expert—simply share what you have learned.
- **Keep participants actively involved.** Allow participants to ask questions, share ideas with one another and get as much hands-on experience as possible. Remember: telling is not training.
- **Be yourself.** Participants appreciate (and learn more from) instructors who are not only knowledgeable, but also approachable, personable and dedicated.

## Preparing the Classroom

To complete your final preparations, arrive at the training site at least one hour before class begins.

- **Find the Location of these Public Facilities or Services**  
Restrooms / Kitchen facilities or vending machines / Emergency exits
- **Prepare Materials**  
This Instructor’s Guide (with all your preparation notes in it) / The Participant Guide (one for each participant) / The PowerPoint / Evaluation Forms / Sign-in form (to be turned in to the affiliate office after class)
- **Prepare Classroom and Test Equipment**  
Flipchart with stand or whiteboard / Markers / Microphone or sound system (if needed) / Laptop computer with LCD projector

Arrange the tables and chairs in the room so that participants will be able to talk with one another, work in small groups and take notes / Make sure the room is not too hot or cold / Ensure that there is adequate lighting / Write the course agenda on the flipchart or whiteboard

# Table of Contents

<b>Message to Apartment Leasing Professionals</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Course Schedule</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introductions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Learning Goals</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Module 1 - Your Brand and Reputation</b>	<b>4</b>
Market Trust: Build Your Brand and Reputation	4
Emotional Connections	5
Branding and Managing Your Reputation	7
Activity: When Things Go Wrong	9
Summary	9
<b>Module 2 - Keeping Your Property Showable</b>	<b>10</b>
Bill's Apartment Tour: Blu Nest Apartments	10
Keeping Your Community Showable	11
Tips from Experienced Leasing Professionals	19
Activity	19

<b>Module 3 - Marketing Your Community</b>	<b>21</b>
Activity: Joe’s Apartment Search Begins	21
Outreach Marketing	22
Inbound Marketing	24
Activity	26
Summary	27
<b>Course Summary</b>	<b>27</b>





Slide 2

## Message to Apartment Leasing Professionals

The Certified Apartment Leasing Professional (CALP) program is designed to teach leasing skills to multifamily residential management professionals. It has been recently enhanced to reflect the changing dynamic of techniques, technology and sales demanded by the responsibilities of this position. Your managers, supervisors and executives understand your importance to the industry. They recognize you as the key to leasing, renewing and serving future and current residents of your communities.



Slide 3

**Bringing in New Residents: Be Prepared** is one course in the CALP series.

The complete set of CALP courses is:

- 1. Bringing in New Residents: Be Prepared**
- 2. Marketing and Maintaining your Community**
- 3. Why Your Competition Matters**
- 4. Relevant Laws and How to Apply Them**
- 5. The Sales Process and Building Relationships**
- 6. Effectively Meeting the Needs of Current Residents**
- 7. Market Analysis for Leasing Professionals**

For more information about this program or any of NAAEI's education programs, ask your instructor, contact your local apartment association, or contact **NAAEI** at **833-86-MYNAA** or **education@naahq.org**.



## Course Schedule

This course includes three modules and will run for approximately two and one half hours. Each module will include a mix of activities, discussions, watching videos and slides. [Note: the participant guide shows only the module names and times, not the specific components.]

The time structure of the course will be:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Module 1 - Your Brand and Reputation</b>	<b>1 hour</b>
Introductions	
Market Trust: Build Your Brand and Reputation	
Emotional Connections	
Branding and Managing Your Reputation	
Activity	
Summary	
<b>Module 2 - Keeping Your Property Showable</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
Bill's Apartment Tour: Blu Nest Apartments	
Keeping Your Community Showable	
Lessons Learned	
Activity	
Summary	
<b>Break</b>	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>Module 3 - Marketing Your Community</b>	<b>30 minutes</b>
Activity: Joe's Apartment Search Begins	
Outreach Marketing	
Inbound Marketing	
Activity	
Summary	



Slide 5

---

*Introduce yourself first and then ask all participants to do the same.*

---

## Introductions

Welcome to the **Marketing and Maintaining Your Community** course, part of the National Apartment Association Education Institute's Certified Apartment Leasing Professional program!

Your instructor will ask you to participate in the following activity:

Introduce yourself to the group and answer the following questions:

- **As a customer, do you usually shop by brand or price?**
- **Have you ever had a bad surprise while on tour with a prospective resident because something wasn't ready?**
- **Have you "shopped" your own community's online image?**

If the class is large, then participants may do this activity in smaller groups.



Slide 6

## Learning Goals

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- **Assist in marketing your community.**
- **Stay on top of your community's reputation.**



## Module 1 - Your Brand and Reputation



### MARKET TRUST: BUILD YOUR BRAND AND REPUTATION



Your instructor will show a video from FranklinCovey about building a company's brand and reputation. There will be a brief introduction, followed by a video entitled "Market Trust: Build Your Brand and Reputation." After you see the videos, your instructor will ask you to answer four questions about it.

*Divide the students into four groups - or two if the class is small. Tell students to be thinking about the four questions as they watch the video. Ask each group to be responsible for recalling answers for each question.*



#### Market Trust: Question 1 of 4



Think about the video you just watched. Name two specific things people said they liked about a brand or product.

*Best answers include:*

- *The quality of the chocolate at a chocolate producer—"the taste of the cocoa beans."*
- *The honesty from the sunglasses company—"everything they presented to me was true."*
- *The people at a company—"The people there are nice, straightforward—why wouldn't I go back?"*

*Answers to questions will appear in italics in this guide. In the participants' version of the guide, they see lines to write their answers or to take notes.*



#### Market Trust: Question 2 of 4



What did Johnson & Johnson do to maintain brand loyalty after the Tylenol cyanide poisonings?

*The best answer is:*

- *They immediately pulled all Tylenol from the shelves —31 million bottles pulled from store shelves at a cost of more than \$125 million—and brought Tylenol back to the market a month later in a new, triple-sealed package. People were clearly impressed with the brand's integrity and Tylenol was again the most popular over-the-counter pain medication in the U.S. within a year.*

*You may want to discuss participants' answers, as well as the "best answer," with the participant group*



### Market Trust: Question 3 of 4



What evidence do you have that your apartment community is a trusted brand or has a trustworthy reputation?

---

*The best answers might include:*

- *Feedback from current, past, or prospective residents*
- *Web postings on reputation sites such as Yelp.com and ApartmentRating.com, though those may vary in reliability*
- *Comments and feedback from others in the apartment industry (your competitors have heard about you the same way you've heard about them!)*
- *Point of service survey results from residents*
- *Strong retention results*



### Market Trust: Question 4 of 4



How could you as a Leasing Professional improve your community's reputation? Has anyone been in a situation where your community's reputation was lost or damaged?

---

*Sample answers might include:*

- *Improve your processes to provide better and more available service to residents*
- *Add extra services or amenities; improve communication with prospective residents*
- *Improve your community's online presence, including the use of social media*
- *Proactively track and manage feedback quickly*



In the world we live in, our reputation is everything. If for one reason or another somebody decides he or she doesn't like us, our reputation can be damaged in front of millions of people on the Internet. The opposite is also true. If people like us, the word can spread to millions of people. So it's very important that we take care of our reputation.



## EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS

Now think about what makes you connect with a company, emotionally. Answer the question below. You will then discuss your thoughts with your instructor and with other participants.

Students will write in their text, then ask for volunteers to describe what they wrote.

What makes you connect with a company, emotionally? Describe three things from your experiences.

---

*Let's talk about your ideas. Others' answers have included:*

- *They make me feel as if they know me, I'm not just a number.*
- *They treat me with respect.*
- *They listen to me and respond honestly.*



Slide 15

### **The emotional connection is the vital link from your reputation to your brand.**

How your customers react emotionally to your community goes beyond property location, facilities and people to how all of those make prospective residents and current residents feel. A strong positive emotional link to your property creates a positive, memorable brand.

### **VIDEOS:**



Slide 16-17

#### ***Gina Engages the Prospect***



Gina asks where the prospect is coming from. What happens when the caller responds?

---

*Best answers include:*

- *Gina immediately tries to connect by explaining her similar background. This creates a relationship with the prospect.*

What does Gina find out about the prospect?

---

*Best answers include:*

- *The prospect wants a two-bedroom*
- *The prospect will be moving in with a roommate*
- *The prospect may be getting a dog*
- *The prospect wants to move in in the middle of July*



Slide 18-19

#### ***Gina and Amanda in the Fitness Center***



Why does Gina ask what Amanda likes to do in her spare time?

---

*Best answers include:*

- *To develop a relationship with the prospect*

What does Amanda ask about in response?

---

*Best answers include:*

- *She mentioned she liked to work out and that she would probably be looking for a new gym.*

How did Gina react to Amanda's comment? What did she do?

*Best answers include:*

- *She said she could do even better than a local gym, that there was a fitness center on the property. Then she went the extra mile by selling the savings on a monthly gym fee.*

What are the key takeaways from this exchange?

*Sample answers might include:*

- *Gina listened carefully*
- *Gina connected what Amanda wanted to what the property offered*
- *Gina showed Amanda that she cared about Amanda's pursuits*



Slide 20

## BRANDING AND MANAGING YOUR REPUTATION

### **Branding**

What exactly does “branding” mean? Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services and it differentiates your offering from that of your competitors.

### **Branding in the Apartment Industry**

There's a lot of competition in the apartment industry and branding matters when residents must decide whether to move out or are deciding among potential new homes. So your brand matters! A 2019 Renter Insight and Digital Engagement survey found that 93% of US apartment seekers have used online reviews in their search. 74% of those look at 1-10 reviews; 85% will look at a review after a friend or family member recommends it and 64% would actually pay more rent for a highly ranked or reviewed community.

Branding isn't only about having the best of everything, however. Your community's brand could be a “value” brand, the way some hotel chains are known for being clean, quiet and inexpensive. Knowing what separates you from your competitors can create and build a brand.



Slide 21

### **Monitoring Your Reputation**

As you've seen, it's critical to monitor your community's reputation. Here are some ways to keep on top of the way people perceive your community:

- Social media and many Internet intake sites such as Yelp, ApartmentRatings and Google Reviews provide easy ways for you to influence your reputation. By monitoring these sites effectively, the Leasing Professional has input into how the neighborhood views your brand.
- Listen to feedback and comments from current and prospective residents.
- Regularly survey your residents to gather additional feedback and comments.

*Instruct students to go to their text and review with them the following two pages.*

- Search for your community online and see what people are saying.
- Ask others in the apartment industry how they view your community.
- Take a “step back” and put yourself in the mindset of a resident or prospective resident.
- “Shop” your own brand online with the mindset of a resident or prospective resident.
- Consider how you would perceive your community if you didn’t work there.
- Stay on top of all advertising and posting sources for your community and what the ads say and look like.

### ***Managing Your Reputation***

It’s one thing to monitor your reputation—but then you also have to do something about it to continue to improve people’s perception of your community! Here are 10 ways to do that:

1. **Be proactive.** Don’t wait to respond to a resident or prospective resident—initiate the contact and ask for a positive review!
2. **Respond to all online comments**—negative and positive, anonymous or signed—or at least inform your manager of the need to respond.
3. **Maintain an active positive community image** through public and volunteer service.
4. **Consider using third-party services** that will provide regular text and email messages to keep your residents proactively informed of property events and areas of interest.
5. **Actively use your online resident portal** for maintenance requests, announcing events and general communications with residents.
6. **Use your Internet Listing Service (ILS)** or other advertisers to sell your brand with fresh and timely content.
7. **Post (or provide posts) frequently** to all active review and reputation sites to keep positive communication lines open that add value.
8. **When responding online**, communicate calmly and professionally.
9. **When responding to a negative post:** Empathize, reassure the person of your commitment to quality and request personal contact in order to assist the person further off line.
10. **When responding to a positive post:** Thank the person, comment on specific details of their post (this makes them feel that you read it carefully and reinforces the positive thoughts for other readers!), reassure the person of your commitment to quality, offer continued communication with the person. Be timely (in accordance with company policy).



Slide 22-23

## ACTIVITY: WHEN THINGS GO WRONG



Sometimes, no matter how careful you are, things will go wrong. A pipe might burst, a resident might make too much noise, a storm might damage the pool area—all sorts of things can go wrong. But when they do, the key to maintaining your reputation is to follow what Johnson & Johnson did in the Tylenol case. As you saw in the video, Johnson & Johnson followed four key concepts:

- Talking straight.
- Righting wrongs.
- Practicing accountability (don't blame others).
- Getting better.

---

*Divide the class into small groups of 3 or 4. Assign each group one of these situations and have them describe how they would respond using these four key concepts - 1) a missed service request, 2) an amenity out of order, 3) a late notice in error, 4) a part on order delaying service, or 5) a noisy neighbor complaint. Give groups 5 min to answer the exercise and then debrief each.*

As a Leasing Professional, remember that when things go wrong, you have the opportunity to influence your property's brand and reputation. Be positive, be quick. Research shows that a customer who has had an issue that management has resolved is a more loyal customer than one who never had a problem!



Slide 24

## SUMMARY

You've seen how critical brand and reputation can be. The role of a Leasing Professional may vary across communities, from monitoring and tracking only to creating online posts, responding to comments and monitoring and managing all community communication outlets. No matter what your responsibilities, you'll always directly influence how your apartment community is perceived, both online and in person.



## Module 2 - Keeping Your Property Showable

Slide 25



### BILL'S APARTMENT TOUR: BLU NEST APARTMENTS

Slide 26



In this video clip, you'll see a brief tour of Blu Nest Apartments, a large apartment community. As you watch the clip, think about your tour of Blu Nest from the viewpoint of a prospective resident, focusing on how showable the community is.

*Tell the class to be sure to be thinking about how they would rate Blu Nest good and bad performances.*



### Rate Blu Nest

Slide 27



In the clip you just watched, what did Blu Nest do well? List at least three things.

---

*Best answers include:*

- *The property looked nice and clean from the outside and made a good first impression with its "curb appeal."*
- *The model apartment was very nice and was nicely furnished.*
- *The apartment was generally clean, especially the bathroom and closets.*
- *The way the Leasing Professional showed the washer/dryer as a hidden surprise worked well and could have a nice emotional effect on an prospective resident.*
- *The fitness center was large and very nice and had a clear, professional sign outside of it.*



In the clip you just watched, what problems did you see? List at least three.

Slide 28

---

*Best answers include:*

- *The Leasing Professional was on a personal call when Bill arrived, and then didn't get off the call quickly!*

- *She also didn't greet Bill as if she expected him—but he had an appointment.*
- *The Leasing Professional was not dressed professionally enough.*
- *The Leasing Professional's desk was cluttered.*
- *In the model apartment:*
  - *There was a sign blocking the fireplace in the living room.*
  - *There was a crate on the kitchen counter.*
  - *There were paper towels on the floor in the kitchen—it looked as if there could be a leak!*
  - *The living room and bedroom had pillows and the bedspread in disarray.*
  - *The toilet paper roll in the bathroom was broken—it was on the sink!*
- *The fitness center had a broken machine.*
- *The Leasing Professional's goodbye to Bill was minimal and she didn't do anything to suggest a next step.*



Slide 29

## KEEPING YOUR COMMUNITY SHOWABLE

### ***First Impressions Make a Difference!***

People form their “first impressions” within the first 30 seconds. Those impressions are lasting and can be good, bad or indifferent. It is your job as a Leasing Professional to ensure that the impression made from the moment the property comes into view is a good and lasting impression.

If you have been working at the same location for a long time, it can be easy to “coast” and lose the attention to detail necessary to WOW today’s residents and prospective residents. As a Leasing Professional, you’ll want to work to keep a “fresh eye” on your property!



Slide 30

### ***Why Is the Appearance of the Community So Important?***

In the apartment industry, appearance is critical. It’s easy to lose potential residents right away—if your community makes a poor first impression, a prospective resident may not even stay around to learn more. The image you project from the first

moment the prospective resident visits your apartment community must be an image of pride and professionalism. This image already has begun to form in the prospective resident's mind, even before they enter the Leasing Center, as they subconsciously evaluate the aesthetic value of each of the following:

- “Curb appeal”, including on-line curb appeal.
- Signage, flags and banners.
- Landscaping and appearance of the grounds.
- Lighting.
- Exteriors of buildings.
- Amenities and common areas.
- The leasing center.
- The tour route, model apartments and vacant apartments.
- The Leasing Professional.

We'll cover each of these in more detail on the following pages.



### ***Curb Appeal***

Curb appeal is defined as “what the public sees when driving or walking by your apartment community.”

Your apartment community's curb appeal makes a definite statement in a prospective resident's mind before you have the opportunity to meet them. Curb appeal can be one of your most valuable leasing tools. The appearance of your community indicates the type of resident you want to attract. If your grounds are littered with debris, the signage is in disrepair and the parking areas are not clean or are cluttered, your community is making an implicit statement that there's a clear lack of care for your apartment community or the residents who live there. You may never get a chance to impress a guest with your skills if they don't visit because of poor curb appeal.

On the other hand, well-manicured lawns, clean windows and clean parking areas tell a different story. They say that you have something special to offer, that you have an excellent maintenance program and that you care about your residents. Good curb appeal will tempt a prospective resident to investigate an apartment community by creating interest and excitement.

A Leasing Professional should critique the apartment community's curb appeal daily.

## ***Online “Curb Appeal”***

In today’s world, your online “curb appeal” matters tremendously, too! This means how the community appears on-line—websites, your Google profile, Internet Listing Services, Craigslist, reputation sites, You Tube, Weblisters listing services, mobile apps as well as services provided directly by property management software providers.

Your online listings and community site should always:

- Show accurate pricing and terms.
- Be free of grammatical and spelling errors.
- Include ADA-compliant photos, videos and virtual tours that attract and engage viewers and encourage action.
- Contain easily-downloadable brochures which include a variety of contact methods.
- Reflect real-time information.

Your resident portal should include positive and informative content at all times. Be sure to monitor your search engine pages (Google, Bing, etc.) for accuracy.



Slide 32

## ***Signage, Flags and Banners***

Signs are a critical component of an apartment community’s image. They should:

- Attract a prospective resident’s attention (consider fonts and colors for clarity).
- Clearly identify the apartment community or amenity.
- Direct prospective residents to the leasing center or other building (or facility) on the property.

Your community will have several types of signs:

- “Monument” signs are large signs, typically located at the front of the property to capture traffic driving or walking by.
- Directional signs on the property point the way for guests to find the office and buildings.
- Amenity or facility signs identify these features on your property.

Signs should be inspected daily. A sign that is bent, leaning, broken or faded, indicates neglect. If the sign is lighted, its condition and effectiveness should be checked periodically in the evening as well as during the day.

Most signs are (and should be) accompanied by attractive surrounding landscaping, but greenery and flowers should never block the sign itself. Banners and flags should be fresh and colorful. Remove and replace them if they become faded or ragged. They should always be mounted or flown crisply with taut and secured cording.



### ***Landscaping and Walkways***

Landscape maintenance is an important item which should be checked daily. If you are in a high-rise or mid-rise building, you may have more limited landscaping, but the tour path to the office from the lobby is just as important as outdoor landscaping. As you drive or walk to the Leasing Center, evaluate the effectiveness of the plantings, landscaping and grounds of the apartment community.

As you do your daily inspection, look for the following:

- Grass should be green, edged and cut at the proper level.
- Parking areas and drives should be maintained (no potholes) and striped.
- All areas should be free of clutter and debris.
- Carports and garages should be free of dead leaves, oil spots and in good repair.
- Playgrounds should be clean and equipment maintained.
- Recreation areas should be clean, organized and maintained.
- Shrubs and trees should be trimmed.
- Sidewalks and steps should be clean and in good repair.
- Breezeways should be swept free of cobwebs and leaves.
- Curbs and parking stops should be in good repair.



### ***Lighting***

Lighting is not simply for decoration. Its placement and effectiveness are critical to your community's safety and ambiance too.

Outside and inside lighting fixtures should be checked on a routine basis for proper illumination. An after-dark inspection for exterior lights is an important part of your regular building inspection program. All outside, inside hallway and stairwell lights should be in working condition, not only for the overall appearance of the apartment community and curb appeal, but for the safety of the residents as well. If the lights are not working properly, the apartment community may be vulnerable to litigation in case of an accident or criminal incident. Ensure light globes are clean and free of cobwebs and bugs!



Slide 35

## **Exterior Building Appearance**

Both prospective and current residents see the condition of your buildings as a reflection of the overall effectiveness of the management staff.

Take note of the following as you tour or inspect your community. As you do so, be certain to make note of any repairs that are necessary.

- Are gutters and siding painted and well maintained?
- Are windows clean and in good repair? (No broken or cracked window sills)
- Is brickwork/siding in good repair?
- Are rooftops missing shingles?
- Is building lighting working properly?
- Are railings and decorative trim painted and in good repair?
- Are steps and sidewalks in good condition?
- Are building addresses visible, clearly marked and well maintained?
- Are residents' windows covered in neutral colored blinds or draperies?
- Are balconies neat and tidy, not full of furnishings, bicycles, etc.?



Slide 36

## **Amenities and Common Areas**

Common areas are those shared by all of your residents. As you check out the common areas, be sure to consider the following:

- Are floors clean and in good repair?
- Are hallways and stairwells free of clutter?
- Are railings secure?
- Are walls in good condition?
- Are individual doors clearly marked by number or letter?
- Are package rooms neat and orderly?
- Are mailboxes/package locker systems/mailbox rooms clearly marked, free of trash and discarded mail?
- Are furnishings clean?

- Are kitchen facilities clean and organized?
- Are restrooms in good repair and clean?
- Are recreational facilities clean and in good repair, including swimming pool, tennis courts, exercise rooms and other amenities?

Any repairs should be handled immediately upon discovery.



Slide 37

### ***The Leasing Center***

The leasing center's surroundings, furnishings and organizational atmosphere set the mood of the office and establish the level of professionalism. Make sure the office appeals to the five senses:

- *Sight*: Make sure that your leasing office is appealing to the eye: relaxing, not cluttered, bright, freshly painted with clean upholstery and flooring.
- *Taste*: Make sure that your leasing office appeals to the sense of taste: provide at least candy and coffee/water.
- *Touch*: Make your leasing office appeal to the sense of touch: comfortable seating, nothing hard, sample boards of typical unit furnishings to touch, a variety of decorator textures.
- *Sound*: Appeal to the sense of sound in your leasing office: relaxing or seasonal music.
- *Smell*: Appeal to the sense of smell: fresh, not too flowery or heavily scented, no leftover food odors.

Remember that being organized is the key to the success of your apartment community. Investigate and inspect each model apartment before demonstrating it to prospective residents.



Slide 38

### ***The Leasing Center Standards***

Every day, each Leasing Professional should take a moment to view the leasing center as a prospective resident would upon entering the office for the first time.

*How does the office appear to the prospective resident?*

- Are all desks free of clutter with minimal personal items and stocked with leasing materials?
- Is the bathroom clean, neat and stocked?
- Are the trash baskets clean and not overflowing?
- Are the floors free of clutter?
- Are all empty drink containers disposed of and not present throughout the office?
- Is the flooring clean and/or vacuumed and in good repair?
- Is the kitchen area clean and tidy?
- Is all the dusting completed throughout the office?
- Are all windows and glass doors throughout the office clean?
- Do all team members have a “professional” appearance including name tags or badges?
- Are all entrances to the office clean and orderly?
- Is the office supply and storage area neat and orderly?
- Is there quiet, easy-listening music in the background? (check for proper licensing with your management company.)
- Are all plants healthy looking and devoid of dead leaves?



Slide 39

### ***The Tour Route, Model Apartments and Vacant Apartments***

You should inspect the tour route each day to ensure that the route is neat and is free of trash. Each show-ready and vacant apartment that’s available must be inspected each day and meet the following criteria:

- Clean
- Working lights
- Working plumbing, appliances and window treatments
- Stocked with leasing brochures and documents
- Fresh-smelling, not musty



Slide 40

### ***The Leasing Professional: “Personal” Curb Appeal***

Property management is a service-oriented business. As a Leasing Professional, it’s critical to maintain a positive mental attitude at all times. As the saying goes, “You are the community!” Your image and overall attitude will play a key roles in determining whether or not a prospective resident leases an apartment home from you. You can have the best product on the market, but if you do not project an attitude of enthusiasm, achievement and professional image, the lease will be lost before you even show a model apartment.

Project an “attitude of achievement” by:

- Being positive and enthusiastic.
- Being a goal setter.
- Believing in your company.
- Believing in your community.
- Believing in your onsite team.
- Believing in **yourself**.



Slide 41

### ***Professional Appearance***

*“You must first sell yourself before you sell anything.”*

The image projected by the staff reflects its level of professionalism. More than ever before, prospective residents expect Leasing Professionals to look appropriate for their role. It’s critical to be aware of how you look and sound and to dress professionally.

You may be required to wear formal business attire, a uniform or business casual. Depending on your situation, always make sure that your appearance is neat and your outfit is well pressed.

Each day, complete a personal inventory of your appearance—ask yourself the following questions:

- Are my shoes shined and heel tips in good shape?
- Are my clothes clean, neat and pressed?
- Are my hair and fingernails well groomed?
- For women, are my makeup and jewelry appropriate for the leasing environment?
- Am I dressed for success or for a night on the town?
- For men, is my facial hair, if allowed, neatly shaved and groomed?



Slide 42

## TIPS FROM EXPERIENCED LEASING PROFESSIONALS

You may wish to discuss the video with the participants.



Hear from an experienced leasing professional on this topic.



Slide 43

## ACTIVITY

Now you'll complete a shorty activity covering two apartment communities. For each community, you'll see a brief clip and will need to evaluate how showable the community is.

*Divide the class into half and ask each group to look at one of the clips, creating the list of what was done well and what was done poorly. Call on groups to reveal their findings and discuss with each other.*



Slide 44

### Apartment Interior



Watch the clip and as you do, think about how showable the interior is.



Slide 45



In the clip you just watched, what showed well and what showed poorly?

The best answer is:

- *Good things included:*
  - *The bed was neat—the pillows and covers looked good.*
  - *The painting on the wall looked good.*
  - *The nightstand and dresser were fine.*
- *Problems included:*
  - *Two of the vertical blinds were completely down and lying on the radiator!*
  - *There's a hole in the wall, near the floor.*
  - *Plaster from the wall is all over the floor in the corner.*



## Apartment Exterior



Watch the clip and as you do, think about how showable the room is.



In the clip you just watched, what showed well and what showed poorly?

---

*The best answer is:*

- *Good things included:*
  - *The brickwork is clean.*
  - *The plants and landscaping look nice.*
  
- *Problems included:*
  - *There's a hose randomly lying around.*
  - *The archway and awning are in need of repair.*
  - *There's no clear signage.*



## Module 3 - Marketing Your Community

Slide 48



### ACTIVITY: JOE'S APARTMENT SEARCH BEGINS

Slide 49



In this video clip, you'll follow Joe, a 28-year-old bank teller, as he searches for an apartment. As you watch the clip, think about the way that the apartment communities that Joe encounters are portraying themselves.



### Rate the Communities

Slide 50



In the clip you just watched, how well did each of the apartment communities Joe encountered—Highpoint West, Wooded Green and Home Now—present themselves?

---

*The best answer is:*

- *Highpoint West's site was not impressive—it had a generic picture of a house on the home page, didn't provide any real information about the community and had a strange "Click Here" button for more information.*
- *Wooded Green's Facebook pages looked professional and showed the building.*
- *Home Now!'s sign looked cheap and unprofessional—it definitely did not make a good impression.*



Slide 51

## OUTREACH MARKETING

### **Introduction**

There are two general forms of marketing: *outreach marketing*, in which you “reach out” to contact prospective residents, either directly or indirectly; and *inbound marketing*, in which you handle incoming, or “inbound” requests. In this section, we’ll cover outreach marketing.

Promotional marketing is a form of outreach marketing that is used to inform and persuade people about a product or service. It is also used to improve a public image. Promotion types include advertising, public relations, sales promotions, internal marketing and relationship selling.



Slide 52-53

### **Advertising**

Advertising is defined as the non-personal promotion of a product, service or company in mass media that is openly paid for or sponsored by you. Advertising is used to rent apartments, keep apartments rented, raise awareness of your community and move the prospect to action. Like a marketing plan, advertising can have a very specific problem-solving purpose (i.e., increase traffic) or provide continuing awareness (i.e., sustaining ads). Advertising tools and media include:

- Apartment publications
- Directive brochures
- Signage and banners
- Online marketing
- Radio
- Transit advertising
- Newspapers
- Television
- Outdoor billboards
- Direct mail
- E-Marketing
- Visual traffic generators
- Outreach

### **Public Relations**

Public relations describes the ongoing relationships between the apartment community and the public, and the efforts and activities that enhance and create positive images. Strong positive public relations can increase sales, reinforce a positive reputation, create goodwill and add value for present and future residents.

### **Sales Promotions**

Sales promotions are sales activities designed to complete a sale or increase the size of the sale of goods or services by providing an incentive to make a positive purchase decision. Sales promotions include programs to incentivize both the leasing professionals and the prospects.

## ***Internal Marketing***

Internal marketing consists of marketing practices that occur strictly onsite. Typically these practices involve the entire staff and highlight management and maintenance expertise. An excellent example of internal marketing would be an actively-managed Facebook page for the community.

## ***Relationship Selling***

Relationship selling is a process that provides for custom tailoring of community information to individual prospects and residents. Successful sales personnel develop relationships with customers and align customer wants and needs with community features and benefits.



Slide 54

## ***Online Services***

There are many online sites that will market your community broadly. As a Leasing Professional, you may not be responsible for creating or posting the content for these sites. You must, however, know what sites are being used and be prepared to answer inquiries for tracking and measurement purposes. As we covered earlier, the “online” market is as influential as the physical address!

Common online services include: Cragislist, Internet Listing Sites (there are a variety of these), BakeExtraCookies, RapidSoft, Weblisters, Inrentive, Zumper, Padmapper, Swapt, sites offered through property management software and many more. For Leasing Professionals, these inquiries represent real and ready customers! And don’t forget reputation sites as discussed earlier in the course - they are outreach marketing from your customers!!



Slide 55

## ***Relationship Outreach***

Relationship outreach occurs when the property uses nearby businesses and services to extend the reach of their marketing. As with online marketing (or “e-marketing”), the Leasing Professional may not be involved in writing the ads, but may be heavily involved in identifying businesses and services used by residents and that offer a quality partner for your property’s image.

Typical relationships include arrangement with preferred employers, neighboring retail and commercial buildings and resident services—e.g., dry cleaning, food services, auto services, financial services, or any other service your residents would consider important to their lifestyle.

Some relationships involve discounts for residents at the partner business; some include only an exchange of flyers and access by the partner to the community’s residents.

---

*Ask students if they use any of these relationship types and describe them.*

---



## **Other Outreach**

Slide 56

Other types of outreach marketing can include print media, flyer “drops”, direct mail, community service projects, including digital relationships, transit ads and any other methods that “reach out” to the community to locate new residents. As with other forms of outreach, the Leasing Professional is involved in executing the visits, attending and assisting with events and, of course, greeting and leasing to the prospective residents who inquire based on the outreach.



## **INBOUND MARKETING**

Slide 57

### ***Inbound Leads from All Sources***

Leasing Professionals will likely be the first point of contact for prospects contacting the property via telephone, email, or text message, or in-person! A Leasing Professional must be aware of the sources in use by the property—that is, where a prospective resident might have heard about you.

Most of the major property management software systems provide lead tracking services. These services allow you to maintain a history of interactions with prospects, along with their contact information and follow up as necessary. Tracking of inbound marketing is absolutely essential. Popcard, Lease Star, Rent Cafe are just a few examples of the many alternatives used to track and follow-up with electronic leads. But if leads are also being generated by other outreach marketing methods such as flyers or relationships with preferred employers, you’ll need to know about these!

As a Leasing Professional, you’ll be the first property representative to greet someone and you’ll want to be able to acknowledge the “source” (the way the prospect learned about your community) and provide any details for discounts, programs or trades that exist because of that relationship. For example, if a prospective resident is eligible for a 10% discount on the first month’s rent because he or she is an employee of a firm with whom your community has partnered—then you need to know about this!

Responding quickly to inbound requests is critical. Surveys done by a company called Velocify tell us that the chances of “getting the business” improve by 400 percent for those who respond to email requests within one minute, as opposed to those who don’t. Emails that sit for 20 minutes are considered “old”!



## ***Inbound Leads from Automated or Semi-Automated Services***

Call tracking and call centers are widely used at many properties. There are a wide variety of service offerings, from complete phone coverage (a community could outsource handling its inbound calls) to a la carte electronic search services.

Whether your community's phones and email are being answered by off-site representatives or by the onsite staff, you'll need to be aware of your community's lead retrieval protocol. Where is a phone or email inquiry coming from and how will it be tracked? What special terms or information is being provided to the prospect who uses a particular service? For example, maybe your community offers a tour gift for someone who comes from a preferred employer flyer, but nothing special for someone who learned about your community via an ad on public transit.

## **SUMMARY**

Whatever your role in marketing at your property, it's critical for you, as a Leasing Professional, to be aware of your community's marketing approaches and to play the role that's expected of you!



## ACTIVITY



Your instructor will show a video which will demonstrate an apartment community's marketing approach and you'll assess their approach.



### **Rate Glen's River**



In the clip you just watched, how well did Glen's River market itself? What did it do well and what could it have done better?

---

• *Good things included:*

- *Advertising near their specific target audience—the consultants—is a great idea.*
- *Listing on all possible web guides is excellent.*
- *Olivia's mailing list is a great idea, as is sending a monthly email.*

• *Problems included:*

- *The TV ad probably isn't a great value for its cost and the style of the TV ad makes the community look cheap and unprofessional.*
- *Olivia has gone a bit overboard in adding people to her list; finding friends of friends and putting them on her list without their consent or knowledge is too much.*

## SUMMARY

In order for prospective residents to be aware of your community and find it appealing, your community needs a good marketing plan. A Leasing Professional can impact the results of the plan by knowing where and how the property is reaching out to and handling prospect inquiries.

As Joe looked for his new home, marketing played a vital role in influencing his decision. If you know where and how, you can be the one to secure the lease!



Slide 61

## Course Summary

You should now be able to:

- Assist in marketing your community.
- Stay on top of your community's reputation.
- Make sure your community is in good shape/showable at all times.

You can take these skills back and apply them on the job!









**National Apartment Association Education Institute**

**4300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800**

**Arlington, VA 22203**

**833-86-MYNAA | [naahq.org](http://naahq.org)**



CERTIFIED APARTMENT  
LEASING PROFESSIONAL®

