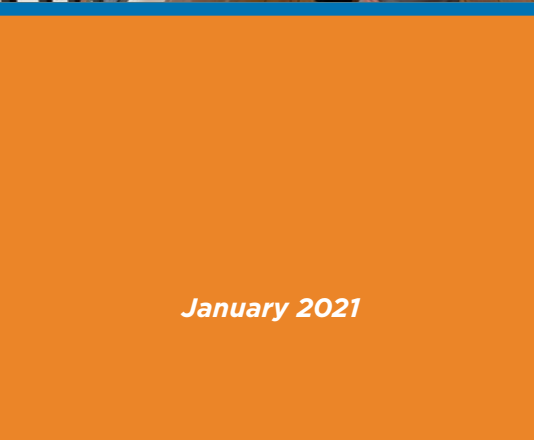


#6

EFFECTIVELY MEETING THE NEEDS OF CURRENT RESIDENTS

Participant Guide



January 2021

SAMPLE

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Acknowledgments

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

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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.

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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.

Effectively Meeting the Needs of Current Residents 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 four modules and will run for approximately three hours. Each module will include a mix of activities, discussions, watching videos and slides. Your instructor will lead the discussions and walk you through the course.

The time structure of the course will be:

Component	Time
Module 1 - Handling Maintenance Issues	45 minutes
Module 2 - Handling Disputes and Incidents	45 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Module 3 - Securing and Processing Lease Renewals	50 minutes
Module 4 - Building a Sense of Community	25 minutes

Introductions

Welcome to the **Effectively Meeting the Needs of Current Residents** 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:

- **What is the most often recurring “issue” for your residents?**
- **When confronted by an angry resident, how do you stay calm and focus on solutions, rather than emotion?**
- **Are you increasing rents with your renewals? If so, what do you tell to your residents about why they should still renew?**

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

Learning Goals

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

- **Build relationships with residents.**
- **Work in a team with your co-workers (front desk staff, maintenance staff, etc.)**
- **Handle issues with, or among, residents.**
- **Manage any maintenance issues on a resident's behalf.**
- **Sell and process lease renewals.**
- **Apply a sense of community in resident interaction.**

Module 1 - Handling Maintenance Issues

ACTIVITY: DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



Handling service requests from current residents is often part of a Leasing Professional's role—and it can be tricky to handle these situations well! Now, you'll participate in several scenarios. You'll see a difficult situation and will have to decide how to handle it. You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

SAMPLE

Interaction 1 of 4: A Modification Request



Here's the situation:

Sean Kagan is a Leasing Professional at a Hudson Grove Apartments, a large apartment community. Sean has just had a conversation with Alejandro, a maintenance staff member. Alejandro says that he was just in Apartment 302 fixing the sink for Maria, a 40-year-old resident.

While he was there, Maria told him that she is having difficulty using her shower and needs a grab bar installed as soon as possible. This surprised Alejandro—Maria seems to be physically healthy and is not in a wheelchair—but Alejandro told Maria that he will take care of it.

Sean needs to talk to Maria to understand the situation and determine what to do.

In the clip you just watched, what should Sean say to Maria?
Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** I am sorry to hear about the difficulties you have been experiencing, Maria. I would like to assist you in the best way I can. Help me understand what I can do.
 - ☐ **Choice 2:** Sure, of course, Maria! I will put in a request for a modification to your shower immediately and hopefully this will no longer be a problem for you!
 - ☐ **Choice 3:** I totally understand and I wish I could help you. But, our policy is that modification requests are granted only for residents with disabilities. If you can prove with a doctor's note or a relevant document that you have a disability, we can discuss the next step immediately.
-
-
-
-

Interaction 2 of 4: Daily Resident Issues



Now, you'll help Amanda, a Leasing Professional, interact with a resident.

Here's the situation:

Glenn May is a resident at Avalonian Apartments. He's known by the community's staff for his complaints and cranky personality. Amanda, the Leasing Professional, has heard some stories from other residents and colleagues about his short-tempered outbursts at people who get in his way. One day he comes storming into Amanda's office with a paper in his hand, stands in front of her desk and waves the paper in her face.

What should Amanda say? Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** Hello, Mr. May. What brings you to our office this time?
 - ☐ **Choice 2:** Mr. May. Good to see you. How can I help you today?
-
-
-
-

Interaction 3 of 4: Daily Resident Issues



Amanda said: “Mr. May. Good to see you. How can I help you today?”

Glenn responds: “I have been paying \$2,500 every month on time for the past year to live in this community and what do I get in return? Nothing but problems in my apartment. Look at this! I have listed out everything wrong with my apartment unit.”

Glenn holds the paper out for Amanda to see. The paper says:

What’s Wrong Today:

1. Broken window in my living room.
2. Mold growing on my shower room wall.
3. Heating system hasn’t been working the past two days and it’s COLD!
4. Leaking fridge.

What should Amanda say? Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** Mr. May, we are sorry to hear that you haven’t been satisfied, but I hope there have been many moments where you enjoy living in this community. Your concerns matter to us.
 - ☐ **Choice 2:** I understand that the issues on the list have been bothering you quite a lot. Trust me, I would do everything in my power to create the best living condition for all residents. But due to the holiday season, we have a bit of a backlog, so your request may take up to 2 to 3 business days for us to review.
-
-
-
-

Interaction 4 of 4: Daily Resident Issues



Amanda said: “Mr. May, we are sorry to hear that you haven’t been satisfied, but I hope there have been many moments where you enjoy living in this community. Your concerns really do matter to us.”

Glenn responds: “I did enjoy the Christmas party, that’s true. [Calmer than before] OK, so what can be done about my list?”

What should Amanda say? Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** Mr. May, I am glad that you had a great time at the party! Our team put in long hours to make it enjoyable for our residents. We are always striving to create the best experience for the community. Looking at your list, I see that some of your items appear to be emergency items and some are less so. Also, I need to inform you that you will be charged a repair fee if the damage was caused by your negligence and accident. The next required step is for you to submit a work order through our online system.
- ☐ **Choice 2:** Mr May, let me help you to submit a written request on our online work order system and then our maintenance staff will contact you today or tomorrow to fix the listed things. Now, some items may require more time to be completed, but we will do our best to meet your needs promptly. Finally, I do need to remind you that any repair fees incurred due to negligence or an accident by the resident may be expected to be charged to you. I will touch base with you tomorrow.

SUMMARY

In your apartment community, you will always encounter residents with a variety of personalities.

This diversity is what makes your work dynamic and enjoyable! At the same time, it can be quite challenging to satisfy each resident's needs. A successful Leasing Professional understands how to tailor his or her style to the needs of each resident. The key is to listen and respond appropriately, showing that you care and hear their frustration, needs and concerns. After all, service and sales should never be disconnected! They are both part of professional community management.

WORKING WITH THE MAINTENANCE TEAM

Great Service Begins with Teamwork

The concept of “great service” is not limited to your direct interactions with residents or prospective residents. Within an apartment community structure, multiple teams must work together to create a safe and high-quality living environment. For example, your maintenance team is an essential business partner that contributes significantly to the success of your apartment community.

To create a positive relationship with your maintenance team, always be sure to treat everyone politely and respectfully. The maintenance team doesn't work for you, they work with you—and everyone needs to work together as a team.

Great relationships with the maintenance team will not only help you in your job (things will go more smoothly!), but will have a positive impact on the residents and the apartment community. Sales and service are always partners in teamwork!

Collaboration is the Key

One of the causes of tension between different groups in any organization comes from working in a “Silo Mentality”. The Silo Mentality is a mindset in which certain groups are reluctant to share information with others, or even harbor hostility toward other groups within the same company. This type of mentality will result in low work efficiency, poor morale and can dramatically impact the culture of your community.

To create a thriving and productive team environment with the maintenance team, there should be strong collaboration between the teams. In a cooperative work environment, everyone needs to work together in order to succeed.

Steps to effective collaboration include:

- Share a unified vision of your apartment community with all the teams and work towards achieving common goals. This helps create an open-access culture where each team values interdependent efforts and solutions. There should be no division of “Us versus Them” between the management office and the maintenance team. To accomplish this, open a dialogue with the maintenance team so that each group understands the other's concerns and you can all work together toward a common goal.
- Share responsibilities with the maintenance team. Too often, some people have such a strong devotion to their specific job description that when gray-area issues arise, they tend to say that it's not their job and blame other team members or groups for the failure. While your team and the maintenance team are accountable for executing your direct functional responsibilities, you should also contribute to the overall success of

your apartment community and support each other in any way you can. Think about job shadowing. Job shadowing is where you accompany your maintenance tech for a half of a day and then your maintenance tech shadows you for a day. Think of how much each of you would learn!

- Allow more people to have a voice. When there are decisions to be made, encourage input from the maintenance team that will help you to be more informed and will give you insights into their perspective.

How Well Do You Know Your Maintenance Team?

Taking time to get to know your maintenance team will work wonders in creating a positive work environment as well as creating a great impression on residents and prospective residents. Residents and prospective residents can always sense tension or collaboration—if you get along well with your maintenance team, that will come through!

For example, imagine that you are a prospective resident on a tour of an apartment community. During the tour, you see a maintenance team member and your Leasing Professional stops to introduce him to you by name, perhaps even offering some highlights or strengths about him such as, “Joe’s been taking care of this community for nine years now!” or “Jack is usually able to resolve any service request within 24 hours. He is one of the most reliable and valuable team member in our community.”

Effective Communication Alleviates Problems

Nurture constant communication between the maintenance team and the property management team. The better the communication and respect within the entire team, the more comfortable and secure your residents will feel about the service they are receiving. It also avoids any mistakes or misunderstandings that could occur from lack of clear communication.

Sometimes, you will need to talk to your maintenance staff on your cell phone or radio throughout the day about repair issues. Remember that you or the staff could be in front of a resident or a prospective resident when these conversations take place. Keep the conversations professional and respectful, being sure to uphold a positive community image to the residents. Try to talk with team members in person privately as much as possible, especially regarding sensitive topics.

Since you are the primary point of contact when a resident has a maintenance issue, you must ensure that full and accurate information is given to the maintenance team. For example, a “loose rod in the closet” needs to describe which closet. One of the most important factors in service satisfaction and resident loyalty is fast, courteous, effective communication between management and maintenance. The team must operate together!

Recognition and Appreciation

An organization that formally or informally recognizes the contribution of their employees and acknowledges their value to the apartment community will have employees with a higher level of job satisfaction. This will have a positive impact on work—the team will be motivated to maintain or improve their good work and as a result, the quality of the property and community will be recognized by the residents.

In your community, what are some ways you can recognize the service work of your maintenance team members? It may seem that some maintenance team members are more comfortable working behind the scenes and just taking care of the requests and don't need (or want) recognition. The truth is, their work and their relationship with the residents are the cornerstone of the success of your property. Besides, appreciation is a fundamental human need—nearly everyone likes to feel valued. Think about how your company can recognize and appreciate employees from various teams. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- Give firsthand feedback to the maintenance team on work that has been specifically mentioned by a resident.
- Acknowledge their work contribution and the impact of their service in improving the community.
- Recognize opportunities to appreciate and praise their work, whether small or large. Use the company Intranet or resident portal to brag. Make it formal or informal.
- Define exactly what makes a “wow” moment so the team can aspire to reach it.
- Share any and all survey comments about maintenance.
- Consider a financial incentive based upon above and beyond service.

One of the most important factors in service satisfaction and resident loyalty is fast, courteous, effective communication between management and maintenance. The team has to operate together.

SUMMARY

The maintenance team is a critical part of your overall team and working successfully with them is one of your key responsibilities! In this section, we covered some ways you can form good relationships with the maintenance team in order to provide fantastic service to residents. Since you are the primary point of contact when a resident has a maintenance issue, you must ensure the full, accurate information is given to the service team. For example, “a loose rod in the closet” does not describe which rod or which closet.

Module 2 - Handling Issues and Incidents

ACTIVITY: HANDLING ISSUES AND INCIDENTS

Even in the best-run communities, there will be occasional issues between residents, incidents to handle such as safety issues and other concerns. Next, your instructor will show you two scenarios. In each, you'll need to decide how to handle the situation. You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

Scenario 1 of 2: Safety First



Here's the situation:

You're a Leasing Professional at a large, suburban apartment community that houses a lot of families.

Upon arrival at work in the morning, you hear from colleague about a man—not a resident of your community—who wandered onto the community's grounds, then attacked one of the residents' children yesterday afternoon at the apartment community playground area.

Thankfully, the child was rescued in time by one of the residents and taken straight to the hospital. The child was discharged a few hours later with minor cuts and bruises. The mother of the child was in shock at first, but as the shock wore off, became very angry at the poor security in the apartment community.

Jessica, the mother of the girl who was attacked, comes into your office and says:

"My daughter was attacked by a crazy man yesterday right here inside this apartment complex, where it's supposed to be safe. Some of it is my fault for not keeping a better eye on her, but your company is also liable for my daughter's injuries. It is your responsibility to keep this place safe for the residents and you have failed to provide that for us."

What should you say? Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** First of all, I am so sorry to hear about your daughter's incident. I can imagine how shocked you and the family have been after hearing this tragic news. What can we do to make it up to you and your daughter?
- ☐ **Choice 2:** I am sorry to hear about your daughter. It must have been a very difficult two days for you and your family. In response to your concerns about our community's safety, our team will be sending out flyers, newsletters and other communications forms regarding the safety warning notices, especially for our younger occupants.
- ☐ **Choice 3:** I am sorry to hear about your daughter's incident. It must have been tough for you and your daughter. I totally understand your safety concerns about the community. We try our best to keep the premises safe, but it is difficult to guarantee everyone's security. This incident is unprecedented in the past 10 years of managing this community. I think that our community still stands as a safer community than other places.

SUMMARY

In the best response, you are expressing your sympathy to the family as well as taking ownership of the situation with a prompt action step.

Generally speaking, owners and managers of apartment communities do not provide or offer security services to prevent, detect or deter crime or other common emergencies that can occur. It is the responsibility of residents to assume responsibility for their own personal safety and that of their families and guests. However, a management company can be held liable for injury caused due to its negligence and failure to repair something that causes the apartment or common areas to be unsafe for normal use. In this case, the management has a duty to warn residents about reasonable risks of criminal attack. Failure to do so may result in the management company being held liable for negligence.

Scenario 2 of 2: What's That Odor?



Here's the situation:

Jeremy and Sharon Cheng, a couple in their early 30's, are new residents to the Golden Swan Apartment Community. They moved in one week ago, into a three-bedroom apartment home with their two children, 7 and 9 years old.

Soon after they moved in, the neighbors started to complain about a strange odor, perhaps a food odor, coming from Jeremy and Sharon's home. You have been told that they tend to keep their apartment door open quite often. So, you walk over to Jeremy and Sharon's home to make them aware of the complaints.

As you near the Chengs' apartment, you smell a strong odor.

You knock on the already-open door.

Sharon comes to the door and says "Hello, how are you?"

What should you say? Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** Good afternoon, Mrs. Cheng. I am doing well, thank you. How are you enjoying your new home so far?
- ☐ **Choice 2:** Good afternoon, Mrs. Cheng. I am great! I am actually here to talk about a concern your neighbors have brought up to my attention recently. Would you mind sparing some time to talk?
- ☐ **Choice 3:** Hello, Mrs. Cheng. I am doing well, thank you. I noticed that you like to open your apartment door. Wow, what is that smell?

Scenario 2 of 2: What's That Odor?



You said: "Good afternoon, Mrs. Cheng. I am doing well, thank you. How are you enjoying your new home so far?"

Sharon responds: "We really love it here! My children like to play in the big living room like a playground! I love the kitchen. I really like cooking in the new kitchen."

What should you say? Select from the following choices:

- ☐ **Choice 1:** That's wonderful to hear! We always welcome residents from China! They bring in the wonderful culture of Chinese cuisine. I knew a Chinese family who loved to host great parties with so many delicious foods, though I remember a distinct smell from the food.
- ☐ **Choice 2:** That's great! We always work to please our residents, including hearing and responding appropriately to the concerns and needs of our community. And, it has come to my attention that you like to leave the apartment door open quite often. But, may I suggest that you open the windows instead? There are plenty of windows in each room and this will be safer than having the door wide open. Plus, it will help the community be free of noise and odors that can disturb other residents.
- ☐ **Choice 3:** That's good to hear! Well, the thing is, Mrs. Cheng, I am here to bring to your attention a concern expressed by your neighbors. Please do not take this the wrong way, but I am just here as a messenger and hopefully we can work this out. They were complaining about the strong cooking smell from your apartment and it makes it stronger with the main door wide open all the time. Would you mind closing the door and using the windows instead?

SUMMARY

In this scenario, you have seen the importance of understanding other cultures and traditions. It is easy to fall into stereotyping a group of people or expecting them to adapt to your culture. The ways in which different cultures communicate, understand and react are all unique in their own ways. As a Leasing Professional, being culturally savvy can promote success and great rapport in a multicultural community. Cooking certain foods and observing certain rituals and practices should not interfere with other residents' enjoyment of the property, but such discussions should not make any reference to protected classes.

ACTIVITY: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

In this activity, your instructor will give you seven situations. For each, you'll decide what you would do based on a set of choices. The goal is to decide as quickly as possible. You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

Question 1 of 7



Juan is a Jehovah's Witness and is offended by holiday decorations in his apartment community. He visits the office and requests that the decorations in the public and common areas be removed.

What would you do?

- ☐ Accommodate Juan's request immediately.
- ☐ Tell Juan not to use those areas until the decorations are taken down.
- ☐ Tell Juan that you understand his concerns, but that holiday decorations are common and many people appreciate them.

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Question 2 of 7



Abdul Khan is a new resident who recently emigrated from Jordan. He wants to paint his apartment with colors that remind him of his home country. However, the apartment community's policy regarding painting is that residents may paint their apartments, but cannot use bold colors like red, black, purple, etc. but only pastel colors or white. Abdul calls your office and asks if he can paint his home red.

What would you say?

- ☐ "No, you can't paint your apartment red."
- ☐ "We do not permit bold colors, but you can paint your apartment white or any pastel colors."
- ☐ "Our policy is that you cannot paint any bold colors in your apartment."

(This area contains horizontal lines for writing an answer, overlaid with a large diagonal "SAMPLE" watermark.)



What would you do?

- ☐ Permit Lois to have her niece as a live-in-aide subject to passing a criminal background screen.
- ☐ Regretfully reject Lois' request due to potential security concerns.
- ☐ Persuade Lois to hire another full-time aide who does not have a criminal background.
- ☐ Accommodate your policy and let her move-in.

Question 4 of 7



Recently, Greg Hood, a disabled resident, requested a designated parking space close to his apartment door. So you have assigned the requested parking space, even though you do not have designated parking at the community. The resident has later complained that other residents are improperly using his assigned space for their quick drop-offs.

What would you do?

- ☐ Assign a few spots for 10-minute loading and unloading only.
- ☐ Establish escalating enforcement steps to use against violators.
- ☐ Assign a different parking space to Greg that is also convenient for him (there is one).
- ☐ Educate all residents to respect the assigned parking policies.



What would you do?

- SAMM



What is the best response?

- ☐ Write and send off a warning letter to the neighbor who is causing the noise.
- ☐ Meet with Theresa and the neighbor separately to mediate the problem.
- ☐ Require the neighbor to have certain parts of the apartment carpeted and inspect for the compliance.
- ☐ Offer Theresa a chance to transfer at her expense.

Question 7 of 7



Carlos Di Mario has always struggled with severe asthma and allergies ever since he was young. He has moved to an apartment community located near the beautiful nature reserves and parks in suburban California. After living there for six months, he feels that his condition has worsened due to the exposure of secondhand smoke drifting into his apartment from the apartment next door. He later found out that three young male professionals share the apartment and they are all heavy smokers.

After you spoke to the neighbors at Carlos' request, the density of smoke definitely decreased, but Carlos could still smell it! The only reason he moved to the apartment community was for the nature and cleaner air, but now he feels betrayed by your marketing. He requested the following to solve the situation immediately or else he threatens to sue the company.

Which request would you honor?

- ☐ His request to evict the neighbors who smoke to another vacant unit on another floor or building.
- ☐ His request for a reduction in rent since he is not getting the full value of the apartment.
- ☐ His request for building alterations such as sealing gaps and cracks and installing fans or air purifiers.
- ☐ His request to move to a vacant unit away from the drifting smoke.

SUMMARY

Even in the best-run communities, there will be occasional issues between residents, incidents such as safety issues and other concerns. In this module, you've learned how to handle difficult situations!

SAMPLE

Module 3 - Securing and Processing Lease Renewals

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION: EARN THE LOYALTY OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

Having concern for and taking care of your residents pave the way to resident loyalty. In a competitive apartment market, residents are often drawn to communities where they feel valued. Their loyalty to you and your brand can increase and result in more renewals.



Your instructor will show a video from FranklinCovey about how to earn the loyalty of your customers. There will be a brief introduction, followed by a video entitled “The Ultimate Question: Earn the Loyalty of Your Customers.” After you see the videos, your instructor will ask you to answer a question relating to it.

Summary

Now you know the ultimate question that you can use to think about your community’s level of customer loyalty. The question, as you saw in the video, is:

How likely is it that you would recommend this company, product, or service to a friend or colleague?

Your Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score described in the video is a widely used management tool to measure the perceived loyalty of your customers or residents. The scores can be used based on your own perception or on feedback you received from resident surveys.

As Dr. Reicheld described, the formula is:

- % of Promoters (satisfied customers who would rate you a 9 or 10).
- Less % of Detractors (customers who would rate you a 6 or less).
- Equals % Net promoters.

The higher the net promoter score, the more loyal your customers. The score can range from -100% to 100%. Anything positive (above 0%) is considered good and 50% or more is excellent.

If your Net Promoter Score is not where you want it to be, you must:

- Secure more 9 and 10 ratings by strengthening levels of satisfaction in 7 and 8 raters.
- Reduce the 6 and less ratings by targeting dissatisfied residents.

ACTIVITY: CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer Loyalty: A Question for You



Consider the ultimate question from the video and complete your own Net Promoter Score for your own community. Consider how your residents would respond and rate their answer to the ultimate question. Fill in the blanks requested:

_____ % residents who would rate you a 9 or 10
(eagerly recommend you)

LESS _____ % residents who would rate you a 6 or less (not so impressed)

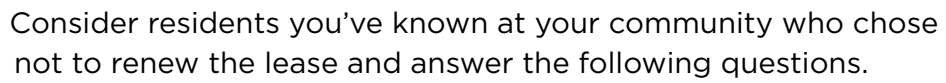
EQUALS _____ % Net Promoter Score

Discuss your results with the class.

SUMMARY

Thinking about your community from the viewpoint of new and prospective residents will help you be more successful and make sure that your community prospers.

Your Lease Renewals



- Answer these questions using the lines below.

THE MECHANICS OF LEASE RENEWALS

Introduction

There's a process to lease renewals and following a clear process will protect you legally and increase the chances of a resident renewing. In this section, we'll cover the mechanics of lease renewals. Please note that there is great variety in how communities price their apartments, pass price changes onto their renewable residents and systematically notify and work with residents to renew.

Sending out the Lease Renewal Notification

It's customary to send out a lease renewal notification to residents as it nears the end of their lease term. This document typically reminds residents about the approaching expiration of their lease and/or offers renewal terms (such as a new rent). This notification may be a form, a letter, an email, a text and may also include the lease renewal document itself or a lease extension form. The recommended time to send out these letters should meet the regulations of your state. The letter should include specific information concerning the renewal, including any changes in the rent, lease riders and any other items that need to be addressed to the residents. Often, a renewal letter also instructs residents that they need to give notice if they will not be renewing and will be vacating the apartment. Many communities are using resident portals and email for these notifications.

The Lease Addendum/Extension

A *lease addendum* is a supplement to the lease which includes terms, conditions, or updates not covered in the original lease. This protects both the lessor—your company—as well as the lessee. For example, if you changed certain policies or fees or if you offer garages or coded entries or animals or satellite dishes, these additions will be covered by addenda. The NAA lease document package has a long list of available addenda. They might also be part of the lease renewal extension form.

Responding to the Renewal Offer

After a renewal offer is made, you should proceed to secure either the signed form or confirmation from the residents or the signed lease renewal within 30 to 60 days of the offer. Some communities do not use forms, just a letter and then schedule a meeting with the resident to complete the renewal. It may be necessary to plan a timely reminder to follow up with the residents to complete and return the copy of the form in advance.

The following is a sample timeline—be sure to consult the guidelines for your state to be sure you are in compliance:

90 Days Out:

- Send out the renewal offer form by email or mail to the resident.
- Follow up with a phone call informing the resident that the form has been sent out and clarify the deadline date by when the signed renewal is required (usually 30 days from the time you sent it, so 60 days before lease expiration). This is a super time to discuss satisfaction levels and offer changes or upgrades.

60 Days Out:

- If you have not received any word or a completed renewal notice a few days after the 60-day deadline, remind the resident of the renewal deadline by phone, email and/or in person.

30 Days Out:

- If you still have not received a response from the resident, make it an urgent matter to contact the resident immediately—or to get clarification that the resident plans to move out.
- Begin to market the apartment to prospective residents, assuming you do not have a signed renewal.

Renewing a Lease

After all parties have signed the lease renewal, it should go into effect on the day after the expiration date of the current lease. Follow your company procedures on issuing a full renewal lease and addenda or using the lease renewal extension form in the NAA lease package.

When a Resident gives a Notice to Vacate

If a resident notifies you of his or her plans to move after receiving a renewal notice, it is time to reach out to the resident personally to attempt to retract their notice and stay! It may also be the time for the residents to look at other apartments and compare features and prices. During this time, you can start searching for another prospective resident to sign a lease. Make sure that you confirm receipt of the resident's "intent to vacate" in writing.

ENCOURAGING LEASE RENEWALS

In its Fourth Quarter 2019 Resident Satisfaction Report, Kingsley Associates reported that over 58% of renters said they would be renewing their leases. How can you ensure your residents will be part of this majority? How can you make sure your residents renew? In this section, we'll cover some tips for doing so.

Take Five Minutes to Talk

Think about how actively you tried to lease your apartment home and community to the prospective residents. You successfully convinced them to move to your community by focusing on the great values, benefits and conveniences of your community and how it was a fit for a particular prospective resident. The prospective resident excitedly signed the lease! If this strategy helped you to bring in a new resident, then why not use it when a resident notifies you about their decision to move out? Remember the ABC motto – Always Be Closing. Especially when it's time for a renewal, it's time to continue to close.

Too many times, a Leasing Professional responds to a move-out decision with a question about when their lease actually ends, quoting either the 30 or 60 day lease termination notice in writing and other paperwork details regarding lease termination. This may be giving up on a great opportunity to identify the intentions for moving out and to influence their decision. All you need is to take five minutes to talk with the resident about their decision to move. You will be surprised by how much your effort can reward you with a lease renewal. Some questions you can consider are the following:

- What services does this resident use or value at your property? (e.g., concierge service for package deliveries, dry cleaning pickup or delivery, 24-hour maintenance service, day care service, etc.)
- What is the resident looking for in his or her future home?

Remind the resident about the cost of moving and offer a quick comparison of market rates for your competitors.

Sometimes, current residents may be surprised to learn of amenities at your community that they had perhaps even forgotten about. Don't miss the golden opportunity to ask questions because you'll never know if you don't ask!

Even better, communicate with your residents throughout the year to better assist you in the lease renewal process—the better you communicate with residents during the year, the less likely they are to plan to move out. Just as in the initial sales process, you should Always Be Closing renewals with current residents, too!

Discussing Automated Rent Pricing

Encouraging a lease renewal may come down to explaining pricing. As we will discuss in our next tip, residents may want a better sense of “value” when you are requiring a rent increase. Automated revenue pricing is based on supply and demand, apartment type vacancies, lease flexibility, competitive rates in the marketplace and future economic impactors like jobs, apartment supply and household growth. That’s a lot to understand, much less discuss with a resident. But the Leasing Professional must be able to support and justify the price with confidence.

The value discussion below clarifies that there are many components that go into how each one of your residents determines value. Pricing is always linked to value – as a consumer yourself, you want the appropriate value for an appropriate price. Your discussion of automated pricing speaks to the value of an objective formula rather than a “gut level,” localized market review to set prices. Yet it still allows your valued resident to use available flexible lease terms to impact the rental rate.

Ensure this conversation encourages the resident’s continued occupancy with you.

Maintain the Value of Your Apartment Community

Sometimes, the rent adjustment for a renewal may be priced “right” or the rent is unchanged, but residents still choose to leave because they no longer agree that their apartment provides sufficient value. Certain deciding factors that the residents consider when renewing the lease may include the number of times they had to make calls to resolve maintenance problems, the quality and upkeep of the common area facilities or customer service issues. The residents choose to rent an apartment home in a certain community for not only great location and price, but also the value they anticipate to get such as comfort, satisfaction, pride and convenience.

Here are some ways to both satisfy the needs of the residents and to uphold the value of your community:

- **Preventive Maintenance:** Preventive property maintenance is always a cheaper option than waiting for a small problem to turn into a large expense. Do all you can to make sure your property is updated and in top shape.
- **High-quality Maintenance Service:** According to a 2019 SatisFacts Online Renter Survey, the quality of the maintenance service provided at the community was one of the top-five value-drivers for successful renewals. A common mistake some management companies make is to cut costs relating to maintenance—even forgoing repairs or improvements. It may save some money for that year, but in the long run, it will end up breaking or requiring a higher cost to fix and maintain. And you may lose residents.

- **Aesthetic Value:** Try to perform maintenance that improves your property so that it will be more desirable to current residents and attractive to prospective residents. Inexpensive ways to make your property more desirable include applying a fresh coat of paint to various areas, or planting trees and flowers.
- **Promptness and Attentiveness:** Another reason residents exit is the feeling that the management and maintenance are not being attentive to their issues with promptness and care. Give residents a sense of faith that you care about their concerns and opinions and that their presence is valuable to the apartment community. Residents who feel they are heard will most likely renew the lease.

Offer Renewal Benefits

Some communities typically offer benefits to renewing residents. The Leasing Professional should meet with the manager to understand if such benefits exist, what they are and under what circumstances can the Leasing Professional offer them.

Incentives such as painting a room free of charge, a carpet shampoo or a new ceiling fan can have a huge impact on rent renewal. Residents will appreciate your act of thoughtfulness so much that they may end up referring your community to their friends. You can further incentivize those residents who have successfully referred you to prospective residents who turned into residents.

For those residents who are uncertain about renewing the lease, particularly due to a rent increase, you can provide helpful information that breaks down the total expenses for moving to another place, such as the cost of moving, the new deposit, moving trucks, etc. You can also provide the market value of other apartment homes that are similar to the home of the current resident to help him or her compare the rent prices. If you can provide information that convinces the resident of the financial benefits of staying rather than moving, the resident may see staying as a better value.

SUMMARY

In this module we have explored how to secure and process lease renewals. As a member of the community team, the Leasing Professional can have significant influence in attracting lease renewals and completing the necessary process to ensure satisfied renewing residents.

VIDEO



Next, you'll watch a video covering three scenarios. Each will show an interaction with a resident regarding a renewal. In each scenario, you'll watch a video showing the interaction and will decide whether or not you think the resident will renew the lease.

You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

Question 1 of 3: Take It or Leave It



Next, we'll watch a video scenario. After the video, you'll be asked if you think the resident will renew her lease.



Based on this interaction, do you think that Hannah will renew? Why or why not?

Question 2 of 3: It's Not My Fault



Next, we'll watch another video scenario. After the video, you'll be asked if you think the resident will renew her lease.



Based on this interaction, do you think that Casey will renew?
Why or why not?

SAMPLE

Question 3 of 3: Two-Year Lease



Next, we'll watch another video scenario. After the video, you'll be asked if you think the resident will renew his lease.



Based on this interaction, do you think that Josh will renew?
Why or why not?

SUMMARY

In this module, you learned some ways to better handle lease renewals.

Module 4 - Building a Sense of Community

VIDEO: THE CURRENT RESIDENT'S POINT OF VIEW



What makes current residents likely to stay in apartment? What factors convince them not to renew and to move elsewhere? In the video you're about to see, apartment residents tell us what matters to them.

LIKES		DISLIKES
The Experience	The Apartment	
1.	2.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

The Current Resident's Point of View: A Question for You



Think about the video you just watched. What new ideas did you get from the video? Name at least two.

Now, your instructor will lead a group discussion about your responses.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY FEEL

In order to encourage residents to stay—and to make sure they enjoy living in your community—there are a number of things you can do. Surveys of thousands of residents confirm that “a sense of community” is one of the proven resident satisfiers. We’ll cover some of those in this section.

Step Up the Social Life

Community-organized events and common gathering spaces are great for mingling and meeting new people. When many residents participate, the energy can fuel the positive experience of sharing life together in your community. The sense of community is what makes modern apartment living important and creates loyalty with your residents. Use your shared space and turn it into a communal lounge area. You can even step it up a notch by fashionably transforming your shared spaces and amenities into rooftop night clubs, outdoor dining rooms, or movie screening rooms. Be creative with events and tailor them to your resident profile. If you are in doubt about what will work—survey your residents.

Redefine the Meaning of Your “Community”

Apartment communities are constantly evolving and enriching the needs of the residents beyond the basic wants and needs. The meaning of “community” goes beyond the definition of various residents living in the same apartment building. It focuses on more efficient and effective ways to build relationships and increase interactivity between the residents. It meets the physical and emotional needs of the residents with family, elderly residents and young-adult residents.

Consider your apartment environment: how can you redefine the meaning of your community that enriches the lives of your residents? How can you progress from being an apartment ‘community’ to an apartment ‘society’?

Here are some things you can do:

- Define and redefine your community. Listen to the voice of your residents and hear their needs and wants. Collect data by talking to people and studying how your residents live.
- Analyze the collected data and determine what the data tells you. Identify areas of gaps and root causes of existing issues in your community.
- Improve or optimize your value as a community by creating better communication processes and channels between the residents and management, implementing creative events and ideas to enhance living experience and more!

- Control your new processes and activities by measuring their effectiveness, seeking and receiving feedback from the community and reflecting on ways you can further improve. Ask yourself—‘are you easy to do business with?’ Your resident shouldn’t struggle through process to get what he or she needs.

Building Relationships

Creating rapport is the key to building relationships with your residents. There are five ways to create rapport:

- Express genuine interest. Find out what is important to them, ask questions and use their first name.
- Be genuinely friendly. Smile, have a pleasant disposition, use a warm handshake, display good manners, maintain strong eye contact and use the tone of your voice.
- Create physical rapport. Try to match body language, vocabulary and tone.
- Be an active listener. Encourage the speaker, paraphrase to show and ensure understanding.
- Seek agreement. Search for a way to reach similarities and look for beliefs and opinions you can share.

Go Green

More and more residents value apartment communities that are environmentally friendly and have energy-efficient living standards in the apartment units. According to a survey conducted by Strata Research, 62% of the residents voted that environmental friendliness was a key factor in their apartment search.

Ways to improve your community’s green living include installing more green areas on the ground, such as Zen gardens, bike paths, community garden plots and adding plug-in stations for electric cars. What products are you using that are made from recycled materials? Which of them have less polluting or carbon imprint? Brag about these efforts towards sustainability and conserving our natural resources.

Use Diversity to Your Advantage

In today's world, it is common to live in a community made up of people with different ethnicities, cultures, traditions, orientations and interests. This is what makes a community diverse and dynamic!

The focus of your community efforts should be on breaking down the physical and psychological barriers that people often build against different cultures. The impact of such barriers is unintentional segregation and isolation. This is not part of the true meaning of community.

So how can you build a community that is trusting and supportive and that can embrace the differences of backgrounds and experiences? By encouraging awareness of differences and promoting inclusiveness. Then, as one community, share and build common interests, goals and concerns.

For example, you can create an event where residents are encouraged to share something about their culture and traditional cuisine. During this time, residents of all backgrounds can mix naturally and learn more about one another's uniqueness. Then, the event can move toward sharing and building common interests, concerns and goals as the residents of the same community. Make sure people feel welcomed so that no one will feel offended. In fact, you might ask specifically for as much variety as possible.

Another example is to have an international market day where residents can feel free to display a variety of foods, items and other goods that represent their culture and backgrounds. The market is a great way to connect many residents in the building of a community.

SUMMARY

In order to encourage residents to stay—and to make sure they enjoy living in your community—there are a large number of things you can do. We covered some of these in this module.

Course Summary

You should now be able to:

- Build relationships with residents.
- Work in a team with your co-workers (front desk staff, maintenance staff, etc.)
- Handle issues with, or among, residents.
- Manage any maintenance issues on a resident's behalf.
- Sell and process lease renewals.
- Apply a sense of community in resident interaction.

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

Notes

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