THE SALES PROCESS
AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Instructor Guide
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Acknowledgments

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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 National Apartment Leasing Professional (NALP) 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 (703) 518-6141 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 [Slide 3], 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.

- 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 at 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 at 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 now 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 yes, 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 and Test Equipment**

Flipchart with stand or whiteboard / Markers / Microphone or sound system (if needed) / Laptop computer with LCD projector

**Find the Location of these Public Facilities or Services**

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
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Message to Apartment Leasing Professionals

The National Apartment Leasing Professional (NALP) 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.

The Sales Process and Building Relationships is one course in the NALP series.

The complete set of NALP 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. The Market Survey Presentation

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 (703) 518-6141 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. [Note: the participant guide shows only the module names and times, not the specific components.]

The time structure of the course will be:

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Introductions

Welcome to the Sales Process and Building Relationships course, part of the National Apartment Association Education Institute’s National 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:

- When you are speaking with someone on the phone, how can you tell they are listening to you? How can you tell when you are face-to-face?

- A prospect’s objections can derail a sales presentation. How do you get prepared to answer any concern a prospect may give you?

- What is your best suggestion for making sure move-in day goes smoothly for the new resident?

[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:

- Get to know a prospect’s needs.

- Match your property’s features to the prospect’s needs.

- Properly conduct a positive move-in experience.

- Support and meet the needs of future residents after the lease is signed, through transition to being a new resident.

- Evaluate your sales performance.
Module 1 - The Foundations of the Relationship Sales Process

Introduction
As a Leasing Professional, a significant part of your job involves “selling”—that is, turning a prospective resident into a resident. An effective sales approach is usually relationship-based—you form a relationship with a prospective resident and help the prospect see how your apartment homes are the right ones for his or her needs.

Successful relationship selling depends upon your understanding that your role involves more than just creating rapport and developing a connection with your customers. You are a Leasing Professional with specialized knowledge and responsibilities. Your part of the relationship with the customer must include your duty to 1) teach; 2) tailor your message; and 3) take control of the presentation.

There are several key areas to know in order to relationship sell effectively. We'll cover those in the following pages. They include:

- Knowing your market, prospects, message and product.
- Understanding each prospect’s needs by asking questions and listening.
- Using a personalized approach to selling based on emotional appeal.
- Closing.

Knowing Your Market and Prospects
We live in a digital world where nearly anything can be found with a click of a mouse or a search on a tablet or smartphone. Our buying decisions are heavily influenced by the Internet and by social media tools. Prospective residents will generally be very familiar with your competitors and with your own community’s online presence and reputation, even before they ever contact you. This means that as a Leasing Professional, you need to do your homework. What do your prospective residents learn about you before they ever pick up the phone, or send an email or walk into your office? Don’t just simply repeat what they already know when you are connecting with your customer.

Do frequent research on what people are saying about your apartment community, what your competitors are doing and not doing and what the trends of the real estate market are. What is happening in your neighborhood with transportation, improvements, retail and jobs? Are these factors causing shifts in the real estate market? How are these trends influencing the purchasing power of the prospective residents? What can you understand about the characteristics of the emerging generation of prospective residents and how to best work with them?
When you know your market and you know what your prospective resident can find out about you, then you can customize your questions instead of just repeating information they already know!

“Marketing and Maintaining Your Community” and “Why Your Competition Matters” in this NALP series get into more detail about how to survey and “shop” your competitors and how to monitor and manage your community’s online reputation.

Knowing Your Message

Before they even first contact you, today’s prospective residents typically know a lot about your community—they’ve researched you online through your property’s or management company’s website, Internet listing services and apartment ratings websites and may have spoken with people about your community via social media, along with using “traditional” methods such as speaking with friends in-person or by phone.

As a Leasing Professional, it’s critical for you to know what “story” is being told about your apartment community online. By understanding what things prospective residents already are likely to know about your community, you can avoid emails and phone conversations in which you do a “data dump” of information that the prospect already knows! In order to be able to do this, you need to know your property’s online “story” inside and out. Plus, you’ll seem better informed to prospective residents when you know exactly what’s online about your community and where.

Asking a prospective resident “How did you hear about us?” helps you find out if the customer has already seen pictures, descriptions and probably even your pricing—allowing you to better tailor your conversation to the prospect and avoid taking your time—and the prospect’s—going over information that the prospect already is familiar with. You’ll still want to reinforce key points, but can avoid spending time going over unnecessary details.

Knowing Your Product

Know the ins and outs of your product—your community’s apartments, floor plans, features, amenities, services, neighborhood and any specific advantages over the competition. The importance of having complete, comprehensive knowledge cannot be overstated.

The more you know, the better equipped you are to be successful. How much do you know about cable and Internet options, average utility bills, water billing, unique features of certain apartments? Do you have enough facts and suggestions about your apartment community to outshine your competitors?
Being well versed in your product is crucial, but be sure to deliver all information in a way that matters to the particular prospective resident. Think about how the prospective resident will benefit from the features and information you are explaining.

**The Art of Asking Questions**

Understanding a prospective resident's needs and interests is perhaps the most important part of the sales process. It holds the key to unlock a prospective resident's interests and concerns and it allows you to effectively sell to the specific person's needs. Asking the right questions helps you gather better information, build stronger relationships with your prospective residents and improve your sales performance. Do use careful and considerate phrasing – your customer does not want to feel like they are being interrogated!

Ask open-ended questions that elicit the prospective resident's needs, interests and feelings. Open-ended questions usually begin with “what,” “why,” “how,” “tell me”, or “describe”.

Sample questions include:

- What are you looking for in an apartment home?
- What features are important to you?
- What concerns do you have?
- Why are you looking to move?
- How do you picture yourself decorating your new apartment home?
- What prompted you to look into our apartment community?
- Tell me what you're looking for in terms of neighborhood.
- Tell me what brings you out to look for an apartment today?
- Tell me what interested you most on our website.
- Describe your ideal new home.
- Tell me what interested you most about our website?

**The Art of Listening**

In order to build a good rapport with a prospective resident, it's critical to be a good listener. As a Leasing Professional, it's easy to be distracted by all of the tasks you’re working on and all of the prospective residents you’re working with—but you need to discipline yourself to block out distractions and listen carefully to each prospective resident.

Good listening is a key attribute that will give you clues about what a prospective resident desires, what is being said and implied and what it would take to move
things forward. In order to succeed as a Leasing Professional, you must commit to deep listening and understanding the prospective resident’s point of view.

**Controlling Distractions**

In order to be sure that you can focus on a prospect’s needs, make sure that you do what you can to limit distractions in your environment, particularly when you’re speaking with a prospect on the phone.

Things you can do to limit distractions include:

- Turn your chair to face the wall rather than facing coworkers.
- If you’re in an enclosed office, close the door.
- Open up your website while you talk so you can help a prospective customer better visualize your community.
- Avoid trying to perform other tasks while you’re on a call with a prospective resident—"multitasking" in this way has been shown to reduce performance by distracting you!

**A Personalized Approach to Selling**

When you discuss and show your apartment homes and community, use the selling technique of creating “emotional appeal.” This is a technique, in which you look to find a way to create personal meaning and value to a prospective resident. Successful “emotional appeal” approaches typically involve connecting features and qualities of your community with a prospective resident’s needs and interests—which means you have to listen carefully in order to understand the person’s needs and interests!

Emotional appeal answers the question “so what?” for the prospective resident. It goes beyond a feature’s benefit to how it matters. If a prospective resident has told you they raise violets – then the eastern window exposure adds the benefit of morning sun and the emotional connection of a happy new home for the violets.

**Closing**

"Closing” generally refers to the final step in the sales process, in which you ask a prospective resident to lease an apartment. Closing successfully becomes easier if you have thoroughly understood the prospective resident, developed a great rapport - (remember - teach, tailor and take control!) and given a great presentation. Also, good closing is about discovering the objections or obstacles that the prospective resident may have. Identify and bring the objection to the table and provide a solution that will result in the prospective resident signing the lease!
Closing also occurs at each step of the sales process—meaning “get a firm commitment from the prospect to move to the next step.” For example, if you have a phone conversation with a prospective resident, get a firm commitment from the person by making an appointment to come to your property to see an apartment rather than just leaving things open. Being able to “close” each step of the sales process is critical to your success. If the customer isn’t ready to make a commitment and you don’t close, then at least let the prospective resident know what the next step is and ask permission to follow up with them again.

**Summary**

As a Leasing Professional, a significant part of your job involves “selling,” which is much more than simply hoping a prospective resident likes an apartment and signs a lease! A successful sales process involves building a relationship with a prospective resident and meeting his or her needs.
EMPATHIC LISTENING: STEPS TO TRUE UNDERSTANDING

Your instructor will show a video from FranklinCovey about how to listen well. There will be a brief introduction, followed by a video entitled “Empathic Listening: Steps to True Understanding.” After you see the video, your instructor will ask you to answer questions about it.

Empathic Listening: Question 1 of 2

What steps did the woman take to gain true understanding?

The best answer is:

The woman tried to discover what her son’s underlying problem was—what was driving him to think about quitting school—by reflecting what her son was saying in her own words. She was committed to understanding without imposing any advice, judgment, or preconceived end in mind. She sought to sincerely understand her son’s point of view and feelings, which helped him open up to talk about the real underlying issue.

Empathic Listening: Question 2 of 2

What is the benefit of listening empathically to others in the workplace?

The best answer is:

Listening empathically to others in the workplace provides effective results in interpersonal relationships in teams, in sales and in organizations. It promotes sincere and genuine relationships that emphasize understanding each other’s feelings and needs. In addition, empathic listening cultivates a culture of openness and true understanding that makes people feel respected, listened to and cared for. As a result, it will increase team spirit, productivity, morale and loyalty—and sales!

Think about how you might be able to discover the real underlying problem with 1) a make-ready technician who is struggling with declining
The heart of the sales process is discovering the real needs and issues of your prospective residents. As a Leasing Professional, you can be more effective by understanding your prospective residents through empathic listening. This is the key to make your leasing presentation stand out from your competitors. Something to think about is how you can commit to improve your empathic listening.

The video included the following points about empathic listening:

- It is listening with the intent to understand by reflecting on what the speaker is feeling and saying in his/her own words.

- It is not about agreeing or disagreeing, but simply about understanding another’s point of view and feelings.

- It is the key to effective communication, solid relationships and problem solving.

**SUMMARY**

As a Leasing Professional, a significant part of your job involves selling. In this module, we’ve discussed keys to following a good sales process, with an emphasis on developing a good rapport with each prospective resident, by listening empathically to their needs and concerns.
Module 2 - Applying the Relationship Sales Process

ACTIVITY: MOVING TO WOLF RIVER

In the video clip, you’ll see a Leasing Professional from Wolf River Apartments, a large suburban apartment community, interacting with a prospective resident via email. As you watch the clip, think about what the Leasing Professional is doing well, or not so well.

Rate the Leasing Professional

In the clip you just watched, how did the Leasing Professional do? What did she do well and what could she have done better?

The best answers include:

- Janet did a great job of responding quickly to Dora’s initial email. However, when Dora wrote back quickly—indicating strong interest—Janet missed an opportunity by waiting an entire day to respond again.
- Janet did a nice job of beginning with a templated email response.
- Janet didn’t ask questions that would uncover Dora’s needs.
- Janet really made a mistake in telling Dora that she has an apartment that would be great for her as long as she doesn’t have any young children. It’s a violation of Fair Housing laws to allow “familial status” to be relevant and Janet is putting herself and her company at legal risk by saying this.
- Janet did ask Dora to come see an apartment, but didn’t “close” very well. She didn’t get Dora to commit to a specific date or time and Dora appeared to be leaving things very vague. It wouldn’t be surprising if Dora never came to see an apartment.

Now, lead a group discussion about the participants’ responses.

Summary

You’ve seen a realistic example of a part of a relationship sales process, including what can go wrong! In the next section, you’ll see some key things to remember as you work through the sales process. As you read them, think about Janet and her experience.
APPLYING THE RELATIONSHIP SALES PROCESS

Introduction

“Sales” is far from a one-time event; as we have already seen, it’s a process! As a Leasing Professional, your sales process really starts with your community and its marketing approach and reputation. Prospective residents often study your community online before ever getting in touch with you, so there’s a part of the “sales” process that happens before you are ever involved.

Once a prospective resident does reach out—whether you’re in touch via e-mail, telephone, or in person—you need to be well-informed and knowledgeable about your community and the market. Then, you need to follow a personalized approach to selling. In this section, we’ll cover the major steps of the sales process.

Key Steps in the Relationship Sales Process

After you’ve established rapport with a prospective resident, there are three key steps to the sales process—though you may often repeat these steps as you continue to work with a prospective resident. The key steps are:

• The Needs Assessment.

• The Presentation.

• The Close.

In the following pages, we’ll cover each of these in more detail.

The Needs Assessment

This first step may be the most important step of the sales process because it allows you to determine how you and your community can meet the prospect’s needs. In order to be an effective salesperson you first must understand what those needs are.

Remember that one of your relationship-building roles is that of teacher – you have specialized knowledge of your community and now you must teach the prospective resident what you know and tailor your message to what he or she needs. Asking good questions will not only help you determine how you can best meet the prospect’s needs, but also builds a rapport with the prospect and helps the prospect build trust and confidence in you. In relationship selling, these are critical qualities!
Open-Ended and Closed-Ended Questions

In Module 1 of this course, we discussed open-ended questions that allow the prospective resident to talk about his or her needs, interests and feelings. Open-ended questions tell you a lot about your prospective resident’s desires. Questions like “what’s important to you in your new home?” or “what would you like in this apartment that you don’t have now?” give you great insight into where you can fill needs. By asking open-ended questions and listening carefully to the answers, you can establish a relationship with the client and best meet his or her needs.

You’ll also want to ask certain closed-ended questions. These are specific questions, designed to elicit specific answers that provide you with factual information—like occupants, vehicles, pets, rental rate, move-in date. The most common closed-ended questions you’ll ask are “What size apartment are you looking for?” and “When you do want to move?”

By asking lots of open-ended questions and key closed-ended questions, you can gain an understanding of a prospective resident’s needs and determine how to match your community to his or her needs.

The Presentation

Whether you’re on the telephone, interacting over email, or meeting in-person, certain elements of your interactions with a prospective resident will be—and should be—a presentation. Step 2 of the sales process is the presentation, which includes the features and benefits of your community and when in-person, giving a tour of the community and showing a model or vacant apartment.

A “feature” is an item or an amenity. It is generally a thing such as a ceiling fan, a floor level, a fitness center. A “benefit” is what the feature does for the resident. The fan moves the air and saves energy; a floor level improves a view; a fitness center adds convenience.

The key to a good presentation, in any format, is to focus on matching the prospect’s needs to the benefits and features of your community. For example, if you know that a prospect works near your community, be sure to highlight that point. If a prospect loves to work out and you have a great fitness center, talk it up!
**The Close**

There’s a famous term in sales circles called ABC—Always Be Closing. “Closing” generally refers to the final step in the sales process, in which you ask a prospective resident to lease an apartment—but you want to be thinking about the close at all steps of the process.

Also, as you saw in module 1 of this course, be sure to “close” at each step of the sales process—meaning “get a firm commitment from the prospect to move to the next step.” For example, if you have a phone or email conversation with a prospective resident, get a firm commitment from the person to come to your property to see an apartment rather than just leaving things open.

**Summary**

“Relationship Sales” is far from a one-time event; it’s a process! If you’re buying a box of Kleenex at a drugstore in a town you will never visit again, you have a brief one-time encounter for this transaction. This is far different from what the Leasing Professional establishes with his or her customers.

When working with a prospective resident, whether over email, telephone, or in person, think carefully about the sales process that you’re following—and always be closing!
WORKING WITH A PROSPECTIVE RESIDENT: PRINCIPLES

Introduction
As you work with prospective residents, there’s a sales process to follow, as you’ve seen. There are also certain principles you should follow and we’ll cover those on the following pages.

Answer Your Phone
When you receive an incoming phone call, answer the call if at all possible. An unanswered call is a missed opportunity—prospective residents might not even leave a message! If the caller leaves a voice message, an average of 6 callbacks may be required to recapture that prospective resident’s interest. Many companies use call centers or call tracking software – all are designed to capture all calls and ensure a quality conversation as the beginning of a relationship.

Respond Quickly to Emails
When you receive an incoming lead, via email or a lead generation system, it’s critical to respond quickly. Prospective residents expect a fast response and you might miss an opportunity if you do not respond quickly.

Most companies have specific guidelines for responding to electronic leads. A good general guideline is to respond to any initial lead as soon as possible and always within one hour. Plan to follow up and respond again if you get no reply.

Use Your Community’s Email Template for Your Initial Email Response
Most companies have an email template to use for initial responses. This template helps you respond quickly and consistently with a well-planned reply. If your company has a template, use it! If it doesn’t, think about creating one.

When you use the template, however, it’s critical that your response does not come off as generic and impersonal. Be sure to address any questions the prospective resident asked in their initial contact. For example, if a prospect asked about the pet policy and the community template doesn’t offer this information, be sure to add it in—and do so near the beginning of the response, so it’s immediately clear to the reader—your prospective resident—that you have personalized your message.

Even when using the template as a base for your message, include photos and floor plans and ask questions of the prospective resident—treat this email as a key part of the sales process, which it is!
Ask Questions in the Email about the Prospective Resident’s Needs

As a salesperson, part of your job is to elicit from the prospective resident what his or her specific needs are. Ask both specific questions—e.g., “What size apartment are you looking for?”—and open-ended ones (“What are you looking for in an apartment?”). If the prospective resident has included a phone number in the email—by all means call and begin the prospective resident relationship telephonically.

The more you know about the prospective resident’s needs, the better you can match those needs to your property and to the way you describe your property to the prospective resident.

Follow Fair Housing Laws

It’s critical to follow Fair Housing laws in all of your interactions. Fair Housing laws prevent housing discrimination and failure to follow them can put you and your property at legal risk—and is unfair to prospective residents.

Fair Housing laws prevent discrimination against anyone based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or familial status.

Suggest Specific Times for the Prospective Resident to Visit Your Community

“Closing” refers to completing a sale, but it also refers to completing any step of the sales process. A good salesperson is a good closer, at every stage of the process.

To close, ask for a firm commitment; for example, in the clip you saw earlier, Janet didn’t ask Dora for a specific date and time that she would come see an apartment, she just let the conversation end.

Take Good Notes

You’ll be working with a lot of prospective residents and no one expects you to keep everything straight in your head—that’s not even a good practice! Instead, fill out a guest card for each prospect, either online or on paper and maintain good, clear, comprehensive notes about each prospect’s needs.

It’s critical that you take good notes throughout the sales process, not just after the initial contact. Good notes have a number of benefits:

1. They enable you to have personalized interactions with the prospect throughout the sales process.

2. They help you build a stronger relationship with the prospective resident.
3. They help other team members who might need to assist the prospective resident when you are not around (for example, if it’s your day off).

Be sure to stay away from any notations or comments – intention or unintentional – relative to fair housing discrimination! Focus on the prospective resident’s wants and needs and specific details about the call or the visit. The more detailed your notes, the more meaningful and specific your follow-up communication can be. Good notes also allow the leasing team to share information so that everyone can care for this customer.

**Be Professional and Pleasant**

It’s critical for you to always be professional and pleasant to prospective residents (and to coworkers and current residents!) Course 1 in this series covers professionalism and team work in more detail. Some good, specific rules to follow include:

- Answer the telephone professionally—e.g., “Hello, Greenview Apartment Homes, this is Lindsay, how may I help you?”

- Elaborate on the benefits of an apartment for a particular prospect before quoting rental rates.

- Be positive about the rates and the unique community features that are included in the price. Build the value of your apartment home and your community.

- When discussing a competitor, always do so in a professional way, without “slamming” them. Even if a prospective resident had a poor experience at another community and wants to “vent,” keep the conversation’s tone professional and don’t pile on!

- Always remain pleasant even if you cannot schedule an appointment.

- Leave prospective residents with a positive feeling. You never know when they may call again or refer a friend. Your kindness will go a long way!

- When communicating in writing—via email or text message—be sure to check your grammar and spelling. If your writing is sloppy, the prospect will emotionally feel as if your community is poorly run, too! Texting presents many opportunities to abbreviate. Be careful to stay professional – avoid “lol” or “idk”, etc.

- Use a friendly tone but don’t be overly casual. This is a particular danger when writing emails or texts—you want to be friendly but also be professional at all times. Avoid text-message “slang” and emoticons.
• When giving a tour, make sure to keep the prospective resident’s needs in mind and connect what you show to the person’s needs. Don’t give a “generic” tour!

Summary
There’s a lot to keep in mind when working with prospective residents, but the more you think about it and practice, the more it becomes second nature. In this section, you’ve learned key principles to follow.
MANAGING OBJECTIONS

Introduction
Almost everyone can find something to object to in an apartment community or apartment home. Perhaps the location is just not right, the lighting is wrong, the price is too high...there’s always a potential objection or concern. A successful Leasing Professional recognizes these objections as opportunities to close more effectively. Next, we’ll cover the most common objections and how to manage them.

Objections: The Five P’s
There are five general categories of objections: Private, Price, Place, Prejudice and Procrastination. On the following pages, we’ll cover each of these and how best to respond to them.

The Private Objection
A private or hidden objection is something a Leasing Professional needs to “sense”—it’s not explicitly stated by the prospect. Because the prospect doesn’t say it, it may be difficult for the Leasing Professional to identify.

If you sense that a prospect is hesitating due to a private objection, a good technique is to summarize the benefits and features of your community again to see if you have overlooked anything or can elicit the specific objection.

Other strategies include asking the prospective resident one of the following questions:

• “May I ask why are you hesitating?”
• “Have you seen anything you like better?”
• “Was there something about the apartment you do not like?”
• “What more can I do to help with your decision?”
• “Are there any concerns or issues that I’ve failed to address?”

Summarize the features and benefits that the prospective resident already recognizes as reasons to choose this apartment home and community and ask, “What additional information or clarifications may I provide?”
The Price Objection

It’s natural for some of us to want more than we can afford. A price objection may also be a private or hidden objection because the prospective resident does not want to admit this. You may be able to resolve this objection by re-emphasizing the value of living in your apartment community. You can enhance an apartment home’s value by reviewing the features and benefits that make it worth the price for this particular prospect. When quoting rents, be sure you are informed of any pricing adjustments based on variety in terms of leases – a longer lease may be cheaper per month!

Sometimes the price really is out of the prospective resident’s reach. Remember that the cost of the apartment home is just a component of other expenses the prospective resident has in a typical month. Consider if the prospective resident will be able to save money in other ways, such as a shorter drive to work, or because the resident would no longer need to join a private club for pool or fitness use.

When a prospective resident states that the rent is too high, you might respectfully ask How close are we? In order to establish the dollar and value amount that must be discussed. Or discuss what the prospective resident has budgeted for housing so you can fully understand their desired rent, utilities and expenses. Often the price objection is simply another way the prospective resident is asking you to build value in the purchase!

The Place Objection

Factors such as work location, shopping, school and recreation make some locations preferable to others for different prospective residents. A “location” is always relative for the prospective resident and their lifestyle. You can’t move your apartment community, but you can prepare for this objection in advance!

Make sure your presentation lists the benefits of the existing location. Personalize the benefits for each prospective resident. Few locations will satisfy all the needs of all prospective residents. Ensure that you have correctly understood the objection - is it the apartment community itself or just the location of the particular unit in the community?

The better you know the needs and wants of your prospective residents, the easier it will be to overcome a “place” objection. For example, a prospective resident may mention that the apartment community is too close to the shopping center next door. You can turn this into a positive by stating that a lot of the residents enjoy the conveniences associated with being close to the shopping center and the short drive to pick up last-minute grocery items. When a prospective resident states that a location is not desirable, you should ask questions to uncover the person’s specific concerns about location. This way, you can craft an appropriate objection recovery statement to address the concern.
**The Prejudice Objection**

A prejudice objection reflects a person’s preferences for specific features that are not available in the apartment home and/or community. Many of these objections can be anticipated. By composing a list of possible or previously stated objections, you can prepare for and anticipate objections that may arise and be ready to deal with them directly.

For example, a Leasing Professional could acknowledge the small square footage of a kitchen by stating, “This is our step saver kitchen.” You might note that space saved in the kitchen was used to make a larger living area where space was more important and add that a compact kitchen means less cleaning time. You might also suggest ways to store infrequently used kitchen utensils or the addition of shelving in a pantry to keep the space tidy.

**The Procrastination Objection**

This objection is less a result of the apartment home and community and more a result of the prospective resident’s state of mind. The objection is that “I’m not ready to make a decision at this time.” Or, sometimes, there’s a hidden objection that you have to uncover: that someone else is involved in the decision, too.

Acknowledge the procrastination and ask if there is any additional information you can provide or questions you can answer. Bear in mind, the prospective resident may need to speak with another decision maker and that is the real reason for the delay.

If your inventory of apartment homes is low, one way to handle the procrastination objection is to create a sense of urgency. Remind the prospective resident of limited availability of this type of apartment home and how the prospective residents may lose out on a home that meets their needs and wants. Be honest – don’t misrepresent lack of availability if it’s not true! Try to discover when the prospective resident would be ready to make a decision and schedule a follow-up appointment.

**How to Manage Objections**

The keys to managing objections are to anticipate the ones you hear frequently and to have alternatives available.

There’s a three-step process that can help you manage objections:

- Admit It.
- Explain It.
- Resolve It.
The most important skill in managing objections is asking questions. You cannot begin to manage an issue if you are not aware of what it truly is. Ask questions!

**Admit It**

Even if the prospective resident has misinterpreted something, or the Leasing Professional has misspoken, the prospective resident’s objection is valid, at least to him or her. As a Leasing Professional, you should admit that the objection is true and agree with the prospective resident.

Then, build on this agreement by either correcting the misinterpretation of information or pointing out the advantages of living in your apartment home and community.

Try to anticipate an obvious objection and deal with it in the feature-benefit-emotional appeal sequence. Seek agreement and never argue with the prospective resident.

If you have a known floorplan issue, consider setting up a model depicting the issue in a different light – for example, a small bedroom could be shown as an office or a playroom. A small closet could be outfitted with extra shelving.

An example may be: “This kitchen is too small.” Your response could be “The kitchen is small. When we designed the step-saver kitchen, we used the extra square footage in the bathroom. Let’s talk about some ways we might be able to manage storage here to give you the room that you need.”

**Explain It**

Prospective residents will disagree with each other about features. One might like the location of the main bedroom and bath being connected, another might not. The successful Leasing Professional puts each objection in a positive perspective.

For example, if the feature is a main bedroom and bath being connected, then the benefit is convenience at night. Or, reverse the process for the prospective resident that sees it as just the opposite. When the feature is the bathroom across the hall from the main bedroom, the benefit is that guests do not have to pass through the bedroom to reach the bathroom facilities. Sell what you have in a creative way!

Finding the positives or the advantages requires advanced thought and planning by the Leasing Professional. It’s best to prepare for possible objections by listing the advantages of each proposed negative. A skilled Leasing Professional accentuates the positive and minimizes the negative.
Resolve It

There are two approaches to resolving an objection. One is the boomerang, in which you resolve the objection by turning a negative into a positive. For example, if the trash center is located close to the apartment home and detracts from the overall appearance, point out that it is convenient in bad weather since fewer steps are required for a resident to dispose of his or her trash.

A second technique to resolving an objection is to use sincere empathy to identify with the prospective resident’s situation or feelings. Empathizing with the prospective resident on how they feel shows that you care and are listening to the prospective resident’s needs and wants.

Empathetic statements usually begin with “I can see why you are feeling…” Then, you could explain to them that they are not the only ones who object to a specific concern. Continue to resolve the objection by using the Feel/Felt/Found technique:

• Acknowledge their concern by expressing that you understand how they feel.

• State that others who have leased at your community originally felt the same way.

• Describe (in the style of a testimonial from a satisfied customer) how these satisfied residents eventually found that their concerns were resolved and they moved in.

For example: “I can see why you are concerned about the storage space and feel that it would be difficult to store your belongings. Others have felt the same way. That is why we make our service team members available to install additional shelves when needed. Residents have found that these ‘extra’ shelves solved their storage issues.”

By resolving the objection with a straightforward approach, you are building trust and providing solutions for the prospect. A word of caution to not overly minimize the prospective resident’s concern by talking about what others have done. The concern is valid for them – you are simply offering alternative perspectives to help address the concern.

Summary

Everyone has objections—even the perfect apartment home for a prospect may not seem perfect at first! In this section, we’ve covered ways that you can manage objections.
**QUIZ**

Your instructor will show five video scenarios. Work with your assigned group to answer the questions. You may wish to take notes using the lines below.

*Divide the class into five small groups or couples. Assign each group one video to resolve. Play the videos. Give several minutes for the group to agree on an answer. Let them reply, discuss and then move to the next video.*

**Question 1 of 5: It’s All About the View**

In the clip you just watched, what should Tom say next?

Select from the following choices:

- **Choice 1:** We have a great mix of families, singles, students and retirees.
- **Choice 2:** It’s a nice community of neighbors, I’m sure you’ll be comfortable here.
- **Choice 3:** Let me direct you to a website with all of the demographic information for our area.

*The Explanation:*

*Choice 2 answers the question, does not identify any protected class and provides another chance to sell the community. Choice 1 violates fair housing law and choice 3 is dismissive and does not answer Tom’s question specifically about the property.*

**Question 2 of 5: Building Rapport**

In the clip you just watched, what could Sharon have done better?

Select all that apply from the following choices:

- **Choice 1:** She could have asked the caller for his name earlier in the conversation.
- **Choice 2:** She could have provided more information about the benefits of the apartment after mentioning that she had three studio apartments available.
Choice 3: She could have persuaded the prospective resident by listing all of the unique selling points of The Bridge Tower compared to its neighboring competitors.

Choice 4: She could have asked open-ended questions to understand the caller’s needs and preferences.

Choice 5: She could have elaborated on all the apartment features and community amenities before asking about a price range.

The Explanation:

The initial conversation creates a strong first impression about you and your apartment community to a prospective resident. Asking for the caller’s name after identifying yourself establishes a personal relationship. Also, Sharon, the Leasing Professional, could have better engaged the caller by determining his needs, interests and preferences. Based on the information, Sharon could have strategically elaborated on relevant details to the prospective resident.

Question 3 of 5: Three-Bedroom Available?
In the clip you just watched, how should Mark respond?

Select from the following choices:

Choice 1: We are proud to say that our 28-story building has 425 units, of which 150 apartment units are three-bedrooms! The price range for this unit starts at $3,000. We will show the model homes tomorrow from 9am to 6pm. I am EXCITED to see you soon!

Choice 2: Yes, we will have some three-bedroom apartments available next month. The price range starts at $3,000 depending on the size of the apartment. When are you available to come in for a tour tomorrow? Also, what are the three most important features you are looking for in your new apartment?

Choice 3: Yes, we will have your three-bedroom apartment available next month. The price starts at $3,000 depending on the size. The three-bedroom apartment showing will be from 9am to 6pm tomorrow.

The Explanation:

Choice 1 and 3 do not offer specific opportunities for a tour. Remember...
that your response to an email should not only be clear and professional, but an ongoing thread of dialogue with the prospective resident. Avoid using emoticons and all capital letters in business correspondence. Your message should clearly respond to the original questions to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications. It’s also critical to set a specific appointment time—not just tell the prospect your hours—in order for the prospect to truly commit to coming to the property.

Ending the response with a follow-up question about the prospect’s preferences, interests and needs can naturally continue the discussion. Since this interaction is via email, you need to respond to the prospect’s specific questions as much as possible, while starting to build a relationship via open-ended questions.

**Question 4 of 5: Effective Closing**

In the clip you just watched, what should Janice do next?

Select from the following choices:

- **Choice 1:** Persuade them by emphasizing the limited availability of apartment homes and the large number of other interested prospective residents.

- ✔ **Choice 2:** Restate the benefits of the apartment community and apartment homes, linking them to Sarah and Brian’s needs and wants.

- ✗ **Choice 3:** Ask for a deposit to secure the spot and offer to assist with the application paperwork.

*The Explanation:*

Once Janice returns to the Leasing Center with Sarah and Brian, she should re-emphasize her solutions to their needs and wants. It’s essential to summarize the benefits of the apartment homes that are prospect-oriented rather than product-oriented. Once Janice has done this, she can take one more step to close the deal—but if she tries to finalize the deal too quickly, she may be perceived as being too aggressive or pushy.
**Question 5 of 5: Objections**

In the clip you just watched, what should Janice say in order to best address Sarah and Brian’s concern?

Select from the following choices:

**Choice 1:** “I can see why you are concerned about the noise level, but none of the residents who currently live in those apartment homes have complained or shown concerns of a noise level to this day. When they were prospective residents to our apartment homes, they also raised a similar concern as you, but I assure you that it has not been a problem at all.”

**Choice 2:** "You have a valid concern about the noise level. One place I used to live in was right by the busy streets and I could hear music from bars and restaurants, sirens and cars, as well as people talking loudly on their phones, so I understand how you feel. But, I assure you that our community at King Meadow Apartments prioritizes each resident’s well-being and privacy. It is important to all of us that your living experience at our community is positive and enjoyable.”.

**Choice 3:** “I can see why you are concerned about the noise level especially at night as it could disturb your sleep. Quality sleep is important every night. Interestingly, a number of current residents with street view apartment homes have also felt the same concern as you, but when they moved in, they found that noise wasn’t really a problem. Traffic on our street drops significantly after rush hour. And there is little foot traffic since there are no sidewalks and we are surrounded by a residential area. Lastly, our community has found ways to positively promote and maintain a culture that is respectful of each other’s well-being and privacy.”

*The Explanation:*

Choice 3 is the best option. A successful Leasing Professional should view a prospective resident’s objections as opportunities to close more effectively. This is a ‘buying signal’ in which the Leasing Professional can provide logical reasons and answers to the prospective residents’ hesitations. After identifying both implicit and explicit concerns by using effective questioning skills, apply the Feel/Felt/Found technique to successfully turn the negative into a positive.
First, empathize with the prospective resident’s concern about how they feel. For example, you might say “I can see why you are concerned about the noise level especially at night and feel that it will disturb your sleep…”

Second, alleviate their concern by explaining how others who have leased in the community have also felt the same concern. For example: “A number of current residents with street view apartment homes have also felt the same concern as you…”

Third, satisfy the needs of prospective residents by reassuring and resolving the concern. For example” “Those residents found these noise concerns very minimum or non-existent. when they moved in. Also, our community found ways to positively promote and maintain a culture”

Summary

You’ve now seen the key behaviors of a successful Leasing Professional during the sales process. Think about how you’ve been working through your sales process with prospective residents and reflect on ways to improve your performance by applying relationship-building skills.
Module 3 - The Transition from Prospect to Resident

Transitioning from a Prospect to a Resident

Once a prospect makes a verbal commitment to lease, the next phase is to assist in a smooth transition into becoming a resident. The key transition phases are:

2. The Lease Process.

The Application Process

There are several steps involved in the application process: completing the application, verifying the application and, on occasion, rejecting an application. Each of these steps are heavily influenced by local, state and federal laws. There is additional information in the NALP Course on Relevant Laws.

Completing the Application

Completing the rental application requires patience, attention to detail and accuracy. Here’s what you need to be aware of when asking a prospective resident to complete an application:

• **Patience:** Prospective residents may experience stress and discomfort while completing the paperwork. You can improve the situation—making it more comfortable for the prospective resident—by maintaining a friendly demeanor, avoiding the tendency to rush and standing by to answer questions and encourage.

• **Attention to Detail:** Show extra care to all details filled out by the applicant for completion and (if the application is filled out manually) to its legibility. You can guide the applicant to complete the form so long as it is within state and local laws for you to assist.

• **Accuracy:** Checking for accurate information on the application is a necessary step to qualify the prospective resident and be sure that the person appears to have the financial resources to rent the apartment. Accuracy issues may delay the person’s approval or move-in and in some cases, may lead to the prospect living elsewhere.

As a general rule, it is recommended that prospects complete the rental application and then review it together with you, rather than completing it with you. If there
is a mistake made on the application, you will not be held accountable for any misinformation provided by the applicant.

### Verifying an Application

After an application has been signed by all parties and the appropriate monies have been collected, the verification of the applicant takes place. Many management companies hire a third-party company specializing in this service to conduct an investigation and verification of the application. Nonetheless, you should understand your property’s verification form and process so you can keep the applicant informed of the progress. Please note there is more detail about the verification process in the NALP Course on Relevant Laws

### Denying an Application

While you should review the information on the application, the prospect has the ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the information. Inaccurate or missing information can be the cause of application denial. If an application is denied by the findings of the reporting companies, your role as a Leasing Professional is to make the applicant aware of the decision by sending a written notice to the prospect. The applicant should be made aware that the owner has set the criteria levels, but it is the finding of the CRA that was used in the decision.

You are not expected to be—and should not be—involved in correcting any problem on the report nor will you be provided with the details of the rejection. Instead, provide the contact information of the agency that made the decision and encourage the prospect to call and obtain more details directly. Remember from “Relevant Laws and How to Apply Them” that an adverse action notice must be sent to the applicant.

### The Lease Process

A lease agreement is a contract whereby the owner of a property permits the resident to use that property for a period of time in return for a rental payment.

As a practical matter, most owners and managers require a written and signed lease document. A lease that is for more than one year is generally legally required to be in writing and is signed by both parties. Major terms of a lease include:

1. The apartment address.
2. The apartment number.
3. The rent.

4. The frequency with which rent payments must be made (usually monthly) and due dates.

5. The lease term.

The lease agreement is covered in detail in the NALP Course on Relevant Laws.

Avoiding Potential Lease Problems

Here are some steps to follow in order to avoid problems with leases:

1. Identify all residents of each apartment and their ages, in order to prevent disputes about who is a resident and who is a guest.

2. In the lease, describe how keys, gate openers and access cards will be delivered to the resident.

3. Broaden the definition of “foreseeable harm” in the lease to avoid potential misrepresentations of the safety and security of the apartment community and home.

4. Identify the required method by which one party should notify the other, usually in writing and delivered by certified mail.

5. Include a way to document the resident’s acceptance of the premises and confirmation of its good condition upon move-in. Also, state a specific, limited time period in which the resident could submit a list of problems after move-in.

6. Document the resident’s acknowledgement of the presence of smoke or carbon monoxide detection devices at the time of initial occupancy, including a statement that they were tested, their operation was explained and they operated properly. Also, the resident should be obligated to test the smoke detector at least once a week and to inform the owner in writing of any malfunction.

7. Explain the purpose of frequent routine inspections.

As you learned previously, a lease review such as the NAA Lease Review Video and a separate lease-signing meeting help the new resident understand the terms of the documents he or she is signing.
The Move-in Process

Once the application has been approved and the applicant notified of approval - your attention should turn to making everything ready for your new resident! We all have experienced how painful and hectic moving can get. It seems that all of the mayhem tends to fall on move-in day, so this can be that make-or-break opportunity for you to create some great first impression moments for the new residents. You can pull off the magic by being thoroughly prepared in the following ways:

1. Use a **Resident Processing Checklist**.
2. Write a **welcome letter**.
3. Prepare a **move-in packet**.
4. Check the **readiness of the apartment unit**.

Use a Resident Processing Checklist

Using a Resident Processing Checklist can tremendously reduce mistakes and risks of omitting any important preparation steps. This simple tool will help you appear prepared and professional to the new resident. A sample Resident Processing Checklist is in the NALP Toolkit.

A resident processing checklist helps you track all steps from the time a deposit is placed until the move-in is complete. This will typically include items—with dates and other relevant information—such as:

- Deposit monies that have been received (how much and when?).
- Application(s) that have been completed (when?).
- Application(s) that have been verified (when?).
- Amenities/ancillary items discussed with this resident (e.g., leasing a washer/dryer).
- Lease generated (when?).
- Lease signed (when?).
- Move-in appointment scheduled (when?).
- Move-in inspection scheduled/completed (when?).
- Welcome packet created along with other items, depending on your community.
**Write a Welcome Letter**

Provide the new resident with a personalized Welcome Letter that develops a warm atmosphere surrounding the new apartment home and community. Place the letter at the entrance of the apartment home where it can be easily spotted. The letter can offer suggestions for the new resident for getting acclimated and connected to the new home or just a couple of welcoming sentences. A sample Welcome Letter is included in the NALP Toolkit.

When you write your welcome note be sure to:

- Put it on notecard stock.
- Hand write it.
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors.

**Prepare a Move-in Packet**

The move-in packet is a practical and important way to demonstrate your thoughtful preparation for a smooth move-in experience. On average, 1 out of 16 new residents has to wait for his or her apartment home keys and lease documents upon arrival on the move-in day. That number is much too high, it should be 0 out of 16!

Be prepared and be ready to welcome the new resident by compiling a helpful move-in packet. The move-in packet may include the following:

- Copies of all signed documents.
- A current community newsletter.
- Special coupons from local businesses.
- An area map.
- Public transportation schedules and routes.
- Nearby school information.
- Emergency phone numbers.
- Guidelines for proper operation of appliances.
- A resident handbook.
Confirm that the Apartment is Ready for Move-in

In order to meet resident expectations, you’ll need to ensure that the apartment is truly ready for move-in. Cleanliness is one common problem. According to the 2014 SatisFacts Move-in Index, 1 out of 10 new residents state that their new home is not clean upon arrival. Paying attention to details can help you achieve great impressions and reviews. New residents expect that all the appliances, equipment and fixtures have been properly inspected before they move in. Studies have shown that 1 in 15 new residents face some kind of appliance or fixture issue. You should set a time to properly test and understand each appliance by learning how to operate it yourself and explain the operation to the new residents.

To be sure the apartment is move-in ready, create a checklist of everything you’ll need to confirm: the apartment is clean, all appliances are in working order, no problems with paint chipping, all fixtures work, etc.

On move-in day, you should be the first one in the apartment, early in the day, running through a “practice” move-in. Use the move-in inventory form, you will actually fill in later with the resident, as a guide to include everything! The best surprise is no surprise!

It is all about coming up with solutions to minimize stress and chores for the new residents.

Summary

The sales process doesn’t end with a verbal agreement from the prospect to lease an apartment—in fact, far from it! In this section, we covered how to make sure your prospective residents are approved and have a smooth transition from “prospect” to “long-term resident.”
For each question in this quiz, your instructor will show you a video showing Jennifer, the Leasing Professional for an apartment community, as she assists a prospective resident transitioning to becoming a new resident. You may wish to take notes on the lines below.

Divide the class into five small groups or partners. Assign each group a video to review. Play each video and have the assigned group provide their answers and reasons. Discuss with the class and then move to the next video.

Question 1 of 5: Nothing is Guaranteed
In the clip you just watched, what did Jennifer do well, and not so well?

The best answer is:

On the good side:
Jennifer was careful to refrain from making enthusiastic promises on which she may not be able to deliver. Making assurances to prospective residents may become binding and misleading if they rely on them when deciding to rent.

Areas for improvement:
She could have shown more emotional support and proposed suggestions to ease the stress. For example, she could have reduced their discomfort by offering guidance in completing the application form and reviewing it with them for accuracy to avoid any mistakes and delays of the process.

Question 2 of 5: Helpful Email?
Which information should Jennifer include in her email? From the list below, should each of these be included in her pre-move-in email? Answer “Yes” or “No” for each.

Candidate Items

• Special move-in parking arrangements
  ✔️ YES ❌ NO

• Explanation of the operation of their new appliances
  ❌ YES ✔️ NO
• Emergency /main contact information
  ✓ YES  ❑ NO

• Information about the neighborhood
  ❑ YES  ✓ NO

• Clear directions and map
  ✓ YES  ❑ NO

• Information about the apartment community
  ❑ YES  ✓ NO

• Move-in hours and regulations
  ✓ YES  ❑ NO

• Instructions to pick up keys and signed lease
  ✓ YES  ❑ NO

• Move-In Condition Notification Form
  ❑ YES  ✓ NO

The items our experts chose were all things that Jace and Megan needed to know before they moved in. In order to not overwhelm them with too much information—particularly with information that would not be useful during the move-in process—the recommendation was to include only some items. Something like information about their new appliances, for example, would be better provided in the move-in packet rather than in advance, before they have access to the appliances.

Question 3 of 5: The Big Move-In
In the clip you just watched, what did Jennifer do well, and not so well?

The best answer is:

On the good side:
Jennifer demonstrated professionalism by checking in on Jace earlier in the morning of the move-in day. A simple phone call to check in or offer assistance can show the new resident that you care and that you are available. Jennifer did well when she followed-up on Jace by calling him again.
Areas for improvement:
When Jace arrived two hours later than the expected time, she could have focused on the most important details rather than trying to explain everything. Jennifer jumped straight into discussing business even though it was clear Jace had a pretty rough day and was distraught. Jennifer did not give enough space for Jace to explain his situation. Even worse, she cut him off by interrupting him and without listening to what he had to say. It was not pleasant for Jace for the lease addenda to be explained A through K for an hour.

She could have shown more empathy by connecting with him at a human level.

Jennifer could have mutually arranged a time with Jace to offer a pre-move-in appointment with the new resident to give enough time to thoroughly explain the lease so that there are clear understandings and expectations on each side. This also shows the resident that you care enough to keep in mind the stress of moving day right from the start.

Question 4 of 5: The Personal Touch
What should Jennifer include in the information packet?
Select one that provides the best information packet for Jace and Megan:

Packet 1:
• Copies of all signed documents.
• An area map.
• Public transportation schedules.
• Location and information on schools in the area.
• Location and information on places of worship in the area.
• Location and information on parks.
• Special coupons from local restaurants.

Packet 2:
• Copies of all signed documents.
• An area map.
• Location and information on bars and clubs.
• Location and information on hotels.
• Special coupons from local restaurants.
• Information on concerts and upcoming events.

✔ Packet 3:

• Copies of all signed documents.
• An area map.
• Transportation route and directions from Clairborne Court Apartment to Star Capital Bank.
• Location and information on nearby pre-kindergarten schools.
• Location and information on nearby dog parks.
• Information on outdoor activities and upcoming marathon races.

The best answer is:

A personalized move-in information packet is a great way to pleasantly surprise new residents and show that you care and remember your conversations with them. It’s going the extra mile to make the packet personal to the specific residents. Packet 1 includes items that are typical and generic to all and any residents, but it does not offer a customized touch to the specific resident. Packet 2 includes items that are irrelevant to the interests of Jace and his family. Packet 3 is nicely tailored to Jace and Megan’s interests and needs. Taking a few extra minutes to print out a map with directions from their new home to their place of employment and adding in details that satisfies their interest and needs will result in an increased customer satisfaction. It is the little things you remember that matters and influences the lives of people.

Remember to make every basic move-in packet the same – to comply with fair housing rules. If you have specific information about your new residents, feel free to go that extra mile – but ensure these are additions and are not discriminatory. Be inclusive, not exclusive.
Question 5 of 5: A Busy Day
In the clip you just watched, what did Jennifer do well and not so well?

The best answer is:

Jennifer really handled this situation poorly.

There are days when phones ring off the hook, online inquiries flood in and prospective residents need attention in the office. You could easily feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you have to manage at hand. A good Leasing Professional knows how to leverage his or her prioritization skills.

Some things need immediate attention, while others are less important. In this situation, the first impression Jennifer is giving to Jace and Megan of their new home is not a good one—Jennifer’s attitude is impersonal and unconcerned. Simply handing the form lacks a personal touch. By doing so, Jennifer also misses the opportunity to demonstrate excellent customer service. It does not take a long time to assist the new residents in the inspection and it would have been time well spent.

She forgot to take care of her Big Rocks and let the little green rocks make more noise!

Summary
In this module, we covered the transition from prospect to resident. In order to ensure a smooth transition and a happy resident, there’s a lot you need to do as a Leasing Professional!
Module 4 - How Well Are You Doing?

Your Sales Persona

Throughout this course, you’ve learned that a practical way to succeed in your sales process and relationship building is to authentically listen to and understand your prospective and current residents. This means you should demonstrate openness, curiosity and a willingness to learn about your customers and how you can help to smooth a prospect’s transition to being a new resident.

The service you provide to your prospective and current residents is crucial to your business success. Remember, it is not only pre-sales discussions that matter, but after-sales service--through the transition to being a resident--that makes your community stand out from your competitors. Impress and go the extra mile for your prospective and current residents!

Tracking Your Success

To measure your performance as a Leasing Professional, establish regular checkpoints to review your progress in relation to the goals of your company. If you identify any areas where you can improve, this is a great opportunity to modify and revise your behavior as necessary.

Also, it is common for prospective and current residents to rely on social media and online blogs which offer transparent reviews and ratings about the reputation of your apartment community. Checking these sites is a great way for you to evaluate how well you are doing and what areas you can improve on. Lastly, how you respond to the reviews (if responding is part of your role at your community)—both negative and positive—can demonstrate your professionalism and commitment to your apartment community.
ACTIVITY: HOW WELL ARE YOU DOING?

Now, you’ll get the chance to think about your leasing experiences and rate yourself on key criteria. After you’ve reflected on your performance, you’ll make a list of areas that you want to work on.

How Well Do You Perform on a Daily Basis?

Take a look at each area and assess yourself on your day-to-day performance. By working through the list, you will be able to take a fresh look at some of the areas that you can focus on to improve.

Rate yourself from 1-5 (1= Never, 5= Always)

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I greet all prospective and current residents in a positive way.</td>
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<td>I am quick to respond to the needs of prospective and current residents.</td>
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<td>I have a good knowledge of the community and our policies.</td>
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<td>I work effectively in difficult situations.</td>
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<td>I am tactful, patient and sincere.</td>
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<td>I dress and act professionally.</td>
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<td>I am good at managing my time.</td>
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<td>I am confident.</td>
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<td>I am flexible.</td>
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<td>I carry out necessary paperwork in an organized and timely manner.</td>
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<td>I care and try to understand about prospective and current residents’ needs.</td>
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<td>I am good at communicating effectively both in writing and speaking.</td>
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<td>I make sure to go the extra mile when working with prospective and current residents.</td>
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<td>I pay attention to details.</td>
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<td>I know how to use technology to my advantage.</td>
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WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE?

Now that you have assessed your performance, think about the areas where you’re not satisfied with your performance.

List those areas below and think of what specific changes you can make in order to improve, starting today! Write your thoughts on the lines below.

Give students a few minutes to jot down their personal key takeaways. Tell them you will look for volunteers to share their conclusions. Be encouraging that everyone’s take-homes are personal!

Call for volunteers to share one area in which they are great at already and another they know they need to work on. If the class is smaller, plan to include everyone.
Course Summary

You should now be able to:

• Get to know a prospect’s needs.

• Match your property’s features to the prospect’s needs.

• Properly conduct a positive move-in experience.

• Support and meet the needs of future residents after the lease is signed, through transition to being a new resident.

• Evaluate your sales performance.

Your relationship selling skills make a critical difference in your personal success as a professional and in your property’s success. As you have learned in this course, it is all about understanding the customer’s point of view and how well you provide service to prospective and current residents.

At the end of the day, sales is all about the impression you have left on prospective and current residents with your sincerity, empathy, knowledge, professionalism and reliability.

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