

How to be online where your prospects are looking

Your digital presence will define you.

Most prospective residents today are not looking through the newspaper classifieds over Sunday coffee as they once did. They are online, and if you aren't, you may not be relevant. If you are online and come across well, you will jump to the head of the line with residents who are a good fit for your community.

Say your apartment building or condominium complex has excellent access to public transportation or essential shopping and entertainment within walking distance. Promoting that through multimedia content tagged to your address and other contact information moves you up in the rankings with people seeking those amenities. What if you have best-in-class security or a fitness facilities designed by and for serious exercisers? Singles events, children's activities or other accommodations - all are defining characteristics that could attract new residents.

Getting seen these days depends heavily on a social media presence. Having a website that runs just the basic contact information and a few photos isn't going to cut it anymore. People want reviews (e.g., Yelp), they want photo albums (not a few canned shots of a vacant unit and your lobby) and 360° panning videos, they want links to local news coverage about the cool things going on at your complex or in your town, and they want to vet your management and overall practices. Beyond all of that, they want it at their fingertips whenever they think of it.

That means you have to be relevant in multiple ways on multiple devices. Your website is first and foremost on your priority list, and it needs to look and navigate professionally. It should have links to other social media outlets where your apartments are favorably mentioned. You can also distinguish yourself by having a page of internally generated expert content on things residents are interested in: safety, renters insurance, and interior apartment design, for example. If you tweet on those issues and link to your page or use Facebook to provide extended content on monthly events that promote good will or increase knowledge, you can develop a loyal following.

A bus-stop advertising campaign combined with social media and your helpful commentary in local newspapers or on popular review websites (TripAdvisor, for example) could all be coordinated to make your apartments or condos the first one people think of in your locale. The key is positive, educational, new content that is detailed enough that it provides something worth reading, hearing or seeing. You want to generate interest without attracting negative attention.

That last sentence is important. Make sure your marketing people clear everything that is put out under your business's name! You don't want a lawsuit for unauthorized use of someone else's content or ideas, and you certainly don't want to be accused of defaming someone or their business. Keeping content positive and original is a great way to steer clear of trouble. Additionally, when using photos, talk to your legal counsel to see if you need written clearance to run photos of identifiable individuals in your marketing. You never know who is trying to keep their activities private.

TAKE A MOMENT AND TELL US YOUR STORY:

What social networks work best for you? Do you have a story to share about social media triumphs or disasters? Please share here.

Posted by **Global Administrator** on 3/31/2015 8:02:55 AM