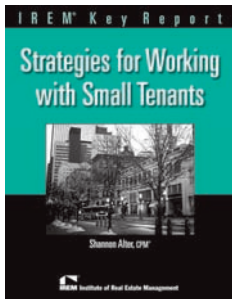


OPPORTUNE TIMES Improve marketing by investing in technology and tenant service



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PURCHASE A COPY OF THE IREM KEY REPORT STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH SMALL TENANTS AT WWW.IREM.ORG.

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THE SAYING, "OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS." BUT WHEN OPPORTUNITY DOES SHOW UP AT YOUR DOOR, WILL YOU BE READY?

Sure, we all have troubles these days with properties, tenants and even employees. It's a challenge to get creative with marketing when much of your time is spent trying to figure out how and where to cut costs. But the dog days of summer just may provide the necessary downtime you need to invest in and improve your marketing strategies. Take advantage of this time so that when opportunity does knock again, you'll be in the best possible position to open the door.

Here are a few suggestions to improve your marketing:

Keep service steady. We all know that customer and tenant expectations are at an all-time high today. How can we meet their needs? It's not magic or rocket science. This is when good old-fashioned customer service counts. The secret is to continue investing in your staff and your services, and to keep the lines of communication open to your tenants, even in trying times.

"We try to proactively communicate with our tenants about upcoming projects, particularly if they affect the tenant in any way," said Brenna Walraven, CPM® and managing director at National Property Management for USAA Realty Company.

Offer new amenities. Dust off your Web site.

If it hasn't been updated recently to accommodate today's tenants, there's no time like the present to improve it. Cindy Clare, CPM and president of Kettler Management, AMO®, suggests offering potential residents the opportunity to see the availability of apartments in real time.

Residents can reserve apartments online as well as look at a floor plate of the building to identify where their apartment will be located," she said. "We also have touch-screen kiosks in our leasing offices which allow residents to 'virtually' walk the building and check out amenities in the surrounding area."

Try something different. Having difficulty attracting potential tenants to your property? Try promoting your properties through social media sites like Facebook, or through blogs, and you may turn a less-than-optimum situation into a positive one.

"We promoted the grand opening event for our apartment community on our Web site, through advertising and through local bloggers, and 500 people attended the opening!" Clare said.

And don't forget to brush off the books. Your job now is to be able to leverage the skills of your team and become a true resource to your tenants and a partner to your clients. Take advantage of all that today's technology has to offer by introducing your team to the world of virtual seminars (also known as Webinars).

So, when those dog days of summer are through, be ready. Investing in your team, technology and your tenants can take your property to the next level. ■