



More than ever, proactive, effective tenant and resident engagement is necessary to keep our properties competitive. Tenant and resident engagement enhances our customers' enthusiasm for and connection to the places where they've chosen to live, work, and play. Engagement goes beyond a mere tenancy agreement; it involves fostering proactive relationships between tenants or residents and management that enhance retention rates, bolster reputation, ensure safety, and shield landlords from potential liabilities. Moreover, tenant and resident engagement establishes an environment conducive to improved communication between tenants/residents and property managers, forming robust relationships based on trust.

Profitable properties depend on trusted connections with tenants and residents

By Lenys Camacho, CPM®, MSIRE

engaged

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It's all about communication

Communication reigns in cultivating engagement. Inadequate communication often brews negativity within a property, leading to internal conflicts and diminished tenant and resident satisfaction. To counter this, property managers can foster proactive engagement by prioritizing timely responses to inquiries, establishing efficient communication channels, and implementing methods to encourage interaction and understanding among all property stakeholders. Effective communication resolves issues, nurtures a positive atmosphere, and elevates tenant and resident engagement.

Seamus Nally, CEO of TurboTenant, a rental management and resident engagement solution, emphasizes the significance of prompt communication, empathy, and fair value as essential qualities desired by renters from their property managers. According to TurboTenant surveys, 72% of renters highly recommend landlords who excel in communication skills, honesty, attentiveness, and empathy, shaping positive landlord-tenant relationships.

Digital communication

Enhancing digital communication channels stands out as a method to boost engagement. With 91% of individuals checking their emails daily, leveraging this platform proves highly effective in reaching tenants and residents. Updating email content and design every quarter can help maintain a large audience on email platforms. Employing online marketing tools, like automated kickback emails, can increase engagement by providing reminders on upcoming financial responsibilities and creating a sense of community by promoting amenities and events. These tools can educate tenants and residents about policies, procedures, and plans for the property, nurturing transparency and trust.

Social media strategies also play a significant role in engagement, with 54% of users exploring products and services on these platforms. Tailoring content to align with the needs of the property's specific tenant or resident base establishes a meaningful connection with those occupants. Additionally, SMS communication and push notifications significantly enhance tenants' and residents' sense of belonging, with almost 100% engagement rates.

Events

Events are an additional method of increasing engagement and building relationships. For example, organizing community events, such as barbeques, pool parties, and holiday celebrations, at a multifamily property creates opportunities for residents to interact, encouraging a strong sense of community. According to surveys, 77% of individuals attend these events to meet new people and socialize. The occasions not only facilitate social interactions but also encourage residents to share ideas, opinions, and feedback with the management team, ultimately enhancing communication and transparency.

Maj-Lene Keech, CPM®, ARM®, ACoM®, senior director, real estate, Greystar, AMO®, 2024–2025 IREM Region 3 RVP, says that resident events will vary depending on the specific property type and market, but all residents respond to experiences.

"Residents love events where they can play a part," says Keech. "Comedy shows have been successful in our communities. And anything with pets. We've never had slots fill up faster than when we did pet headshots."



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Co-working spaces, outdoor areas, sundecks, grilling areas, and roofs with an entertainment space are all popular.

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She also says that resident events are extending into the larger community. "We partner with local businesses for resident events. So, the beer tasting might be at the beer garden down the street rather than on the property." Residents also want to participate in events where they can give back and feel part of their community. "We have a property on the river in D.C. We've had events where residents help clean up the river, and then we have a happy hour afterward."

Similar events are effective in office properties. Networking, food truck days, and wellness-related events, like onsite yoga and flu shot clinics, allow management to interact with occupants, creating a sense of community in the building. "Events involving a social aspect are what tenants are craving right now," says Renee Pinkney, RPA®, real estate manager, Ryan Companies. "Happy hours, live music, sporting event watch parties, workshops, and any sort of holiday celebration give tenants a reason to get away from their desks and interact with their co-workers and other tenants."



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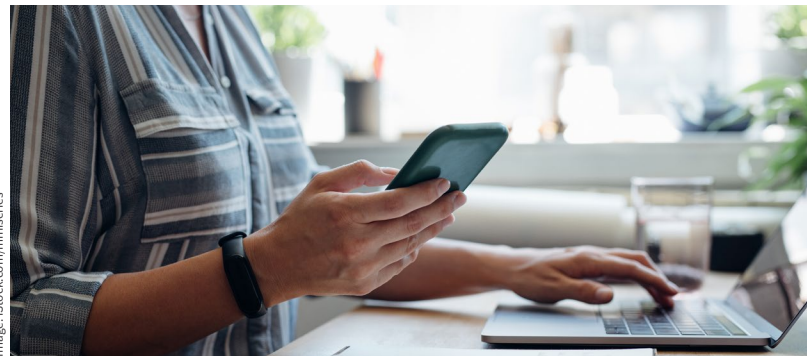
—Renee Pinkney, RPA®,
Ryan Companies

As with multifamily communities, it's all about the experience. "Creating in-person social opportunities is key to providing tenants face time with building staff, engagement in what the building has to offer, and further confidence in the overall value of officing at the property," says Pinkney.

Amenities

Amenities are another important way to keep tenants and residents engaged. Gyms are still popular, says Keech, and they need to have all the bells and whistles. "Residents want a fully decked-out fitness center—onsite classes, Peloton-style equipment." The community's amenities also need to keep up with current trends. "Basketball courts have become pickleball courts," says Keech.

The work-from-home movement has influenced the types of amenities at multifamily properties. Co-working spaces,



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outdoor areas, sundecks, grilling areas, and roofs with an entertainment space are all popular, according to Keech. The changing nature of work has also influenced the types of amenities popular at office properties, with tenants wanting more virtual communication tools and flexible workspaces. "Both small and large conference rooms with video conferencing capabilities are in high demand," says Pinkney. "In addition to formal meeting spaces, tenants want informal meeting areas and amenities such as coffee shops, restaurants, tenant lounges, and outdoor space where they can meet in-person with their teammates, vendors, and clients."

Technology and engagement

The property management industry is witnessing the intersection of advancing technology and tech-savvy generations among our customers. Understanding the unique characteristics and expectations of millennials and Generation Z has become imperative in keeping our properties competitive.

To remain relevant in both the commercial and residential sectors, property managers must grasp the demographic, social, and economic characteristics unique to millennials and Generation Z, distinguishing them from previous generations. Meeting the needs of these newer generations can mean the difference between a vacant property and a profitable one in the years to come. The newer generations are entering and reshaping the market, heightening the necessity for effective digital communication. Assessing demographics helps align operational strategies to meet these expectations, fostering engagement and satisfaction.

Technological advancements like AI are revolutionizing business operations by streamlining processes and aligning tenants' and residents' experiences with the property with their digital lives. Game-changing technological tools include:

behavioral data analysis, generative AI for marketing, visual living, predictive maintenance, automated leasing, computer-aided designs integrating sensors for energy efficiency, and quick response systems. These tools allow property managers to enhance processes, reduce costs, and, perhaps most importantly, allocate more time for interpersonal interactions with tenants and residents.

Better communication regarding basic property management is also key to tenant retention. A survey of U.S. renters by Plentific, a real-time property operations platform, showed that 55% of renters considering moving in the next year say they would be less likely to do so if communication with their current property manager was better. A similar percentage of renters (55%) said they would prefer to have a dedicated app to report household maintenance issues to their property manager. This also would create more direct and immediate

lines of feedback between various groups of maintenance teams at a property.

Embracing technological solutions for tenant and resident engagement gives significant leverage to property management firms. These technologies not only streamline data analysis and operational efficiency but also fortify property risk management, facilitate on-time payments, and

enhance safety, communication, and engagement, among other benefits. They allow managers to respond to inquiries promptly and encourage tenant/resident feedback, allowing us to address minor issues promptly. This prevents them from snowballing into more significant problems.

"The TurboTenant platform is centered on facilitating seamless communication between tenants and landlords," says Nally. "It not only streamlines queries, comments, and maintenance requests but actively solicits feedback from tenants who utilize the rent payment platform." This proactive engagement approach ensures that tenants'



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concerns are consistently addressed, creating a robust channel for ongoing communication. This communication channel nurtures a stronger bond between renters and property managers.

It's important to devise a technology strategy aligned with your organization's objectives while catering to the specific demographics among the target markets of your properties. This pursuit is especially crucial for small to medium-sized property operators constrained by limited capital, making the quest for cost-effective solutions that achieve their predicted ROI a paramount consideration. Platforms such as TurboTenant, which offer complimentary versions, present a valuable opportunity to introduce technologically advanced experiences to tenants and residents without imposing significant financial burdens.

In today's landscape, tenant and resident engagement necessitates a transformative shift in management processes, along with education, training, and the incorporation of tech innovations. However, at its heart, successful engagement still revolves around people and relationships and relies on giving tenants and residents the experiences they want. "We send out surveys to find what residents are interested in," says Keech. "But in general, what they want is that connection, both with the management team and fellow residents. When they feel part of the community, they want to stay." ▀

Lenys Camacho, CPM®, MSIRE, has more than 15 years of experience in business administration, real estate management, and brokerage. She founded Upper Real Estate Management in 2017 to provide real estate management services to foreign national investors. Camacho holds a law degree from Andrés Bello Catholic University in Venezuela, a master's in international real estate from the Florida International University Hollo School of Real Estate, and a master's in business administration and project management certification from Florida Atlantic University.



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