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5 must do's when responding to resident feedback - Part 1

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All property management folk follow up on poor survey responses immediately, sometimes within minutes of submission. That's fantastic, but the conversation gets silent when asked how they respond to survey responses where a customer shows interest in other services, gave a referral, gave a glowing testimonial, or was lukewarm about recommending.

Acknowledge every resident filling out your survey. If you don't, expect your future response rates to drop like a rock. If you're strapped for follow-up resources consider leveraging a standard e-mail template and personalizing to reference something unique in the response. The goal is to acknowledge you read their response and that you care. Below are some tips to do this effectively and efficiently for the different scenarios.

What to do with those upset or dissatisfied? No one disagrees that you shouldn't call this group immediately to make it right and preserve your reputation. Follow-up reaction time is critical and don't just e-mail, but call. The personal touch goes a long way in turning the resident around. The key is to have a process that puts poor surveys on radar quickly. In one instance a company shared that they were shocked to receive a poor survey response from one of their largest customers they thought was secure. They called the customer immediately, nailed down a meeting for the next morning, and saved \$150,000 a year in revenue. It all came down to showing humility, showing they cared, reacting quickly, and making the necessary changes.

What do you do when they share services they would be interested in you offering? A property manager may ask a typical question asking what other amenities they would like to see added. This question may reveal other services, some that you may be able to charge for. Don't assume they will call you if they click some of these items. It is far easier to retain existing residents than chasing a new one. This is another example where the return on investment with a phone call far exceeds just sending out an e-mail to them. You must engage the resident personally and there is no substitute. Ask one open-ended question about what they would like to see in the service.

Part two will appear in the March 1st edition of NEREJ.

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