

5 must do's when responding to resident feedback - Part 2

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What should you do with those "very likely" to recommend you? Over 80% of your survey responses will be positive and glowing. Most property managers ignore these. They view these as their performance yardstick. The best run properties acknowledge these with at least an e-mail that is 90% from a template, but personalized by referencing comments made about an employee or something you did that was unique and special. Acknowledge! If you don't, you will see your response rates suffer in the future. Residents will wonder if you even read them. Be different! The main goal of the survey is to keep the lines of communications open and give residents the opportunity to connect property managers from time to time. Managers can't be everywhere all the time and with our busy lives it is great sending a short online survey to keep the information flowing both ways.

What about those just "likely" to recommend? Most property managers ignore these survey responses. This is a mistake. These surveys offer an opportunity to understand how to solidify your renewal way ahead of time. Ever hear the saying "Good enough never is"? There is a reason why you didn't get the stellar score. It may involve little things they referenced in the comments section, but you may hear "I never give anyone a top score on any survey." That may be correct, but don't let them off the hook. You may want to ask "What did you like most about where you lived in the past that thrilled you? Please share the little things they do." Ask them "If you were running this property what one thing would you change?"

You may not have the resources to call these people, but an e-mail template with a little personal touch will uncover ways to make the relationship with this resident unique and special. There is a great book "The Ultimate Question" by Fred Reicheld where he explains how "likely" to recommend is a passive supporter of your business and a "very likely" to recommend customer is a promoter. There is a big difference. A likely to recommend still considers other properties, may be happy with one aspect of their living experience but not another, and may recommend you. On the other hand a promoter will put their reputation on it. They will say things like "You must live here. They are wonderful, flexible, and always go above and beyond. We love the team and the place. You can't do any better." See the difference? Push for "Very Likely" and watch your bottom line soar and your need to market to new residents drop. You will have new residents knocking on your door. Start off with an e-mail template and personalize your message to the situation. You will get a lot of "likely" to recommend responses and your goal is not to accept this, but drive them to the top score next time. How should we handle when a referral comes in? This is a sensitive issue because the resident has gone out on a limb giving you permission to reach out to their friend or colleague. Here are a few tips. First, call your resident, thank them for the referral, and ask how they want you to approach the situation? Ask if it is okay to use their name as a reference. Then, call the lead and keep the referrer

in the loop as things progress. You may even want to surprise the referrer with a small gift or token of appreciation. I know most properties have excellent referral incentives, but a personal gift goes a long way. These referrals will be better than your average lead. Have a process to acknowledge the referral, keep the resident in the loop, and follow-up quickly while the iron is hot. We should think of all survey responses as gifts from our residents and thank them for the gift.

In my next blog I will share e-mail and phone talking point templates for the top five situations listed above.

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