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## **Adaptations for the property management industry during the COVID-19 pandemic - by Robert Marcus**

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Robert Marcus

Since the onset of COVID-19, everything about the property management industry has changed. From the day to day communication with clients, to the physical and financial demands on the property. This crisis has taught us to become more resourceful, more cautious, more efficient and ultimately, more patient.

Let's be honest, the last few months have revealed that most of us were unprepared for a crisis of this intensity; the process of responding has underscored the importance of having a plan of action that answers "what do we do when there's another pandemic?". It goes without saying that that physical and emotional safety of your residents and essential employees should be your priority.

During the height of the pandemic, we adjusted property maintenance to emergency work only. With the stay-in-place order, administrative functions became entirely virtual and electronic payments became even more common. On-going communication with residents was more important than ever before. As property managers, we were called upon to be sensitive (and should continue) to the needs of our residents and provide as close to a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, presence. It's unlikely we'll see the focus on cleaning and sanitizing let up.

As we move toward the "new normal", it's time to think longer term. Major changes to safety and related systems only happens after catastrophic events. Leveraging advanced developments in technology and automation, like touchless systems and automated communications systems, for both residential and commercial properties will be essential parts of our long-term plans.

Unlike most crises, there is an end in sight and the loop can be closed, COVID-19 has no concrete end in sight. With this lurking enemy, we will need to stay diligent in our efforts, follow state, local and CDC guidelines and keep the safety of our properties, our residents and our employees, our priority.

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