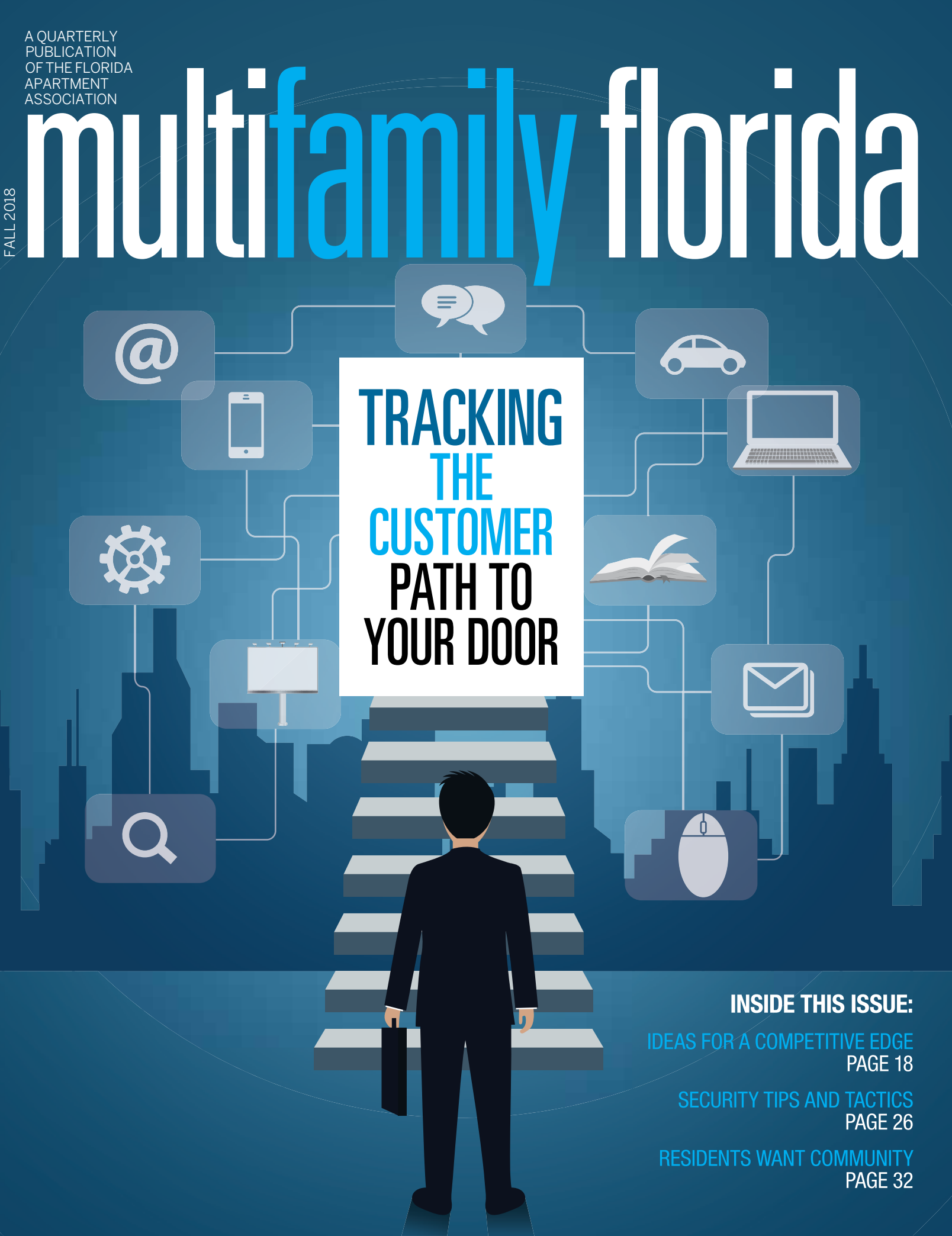


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## TRACKING THE CUSTOMER PATH TO YOUR DOOR

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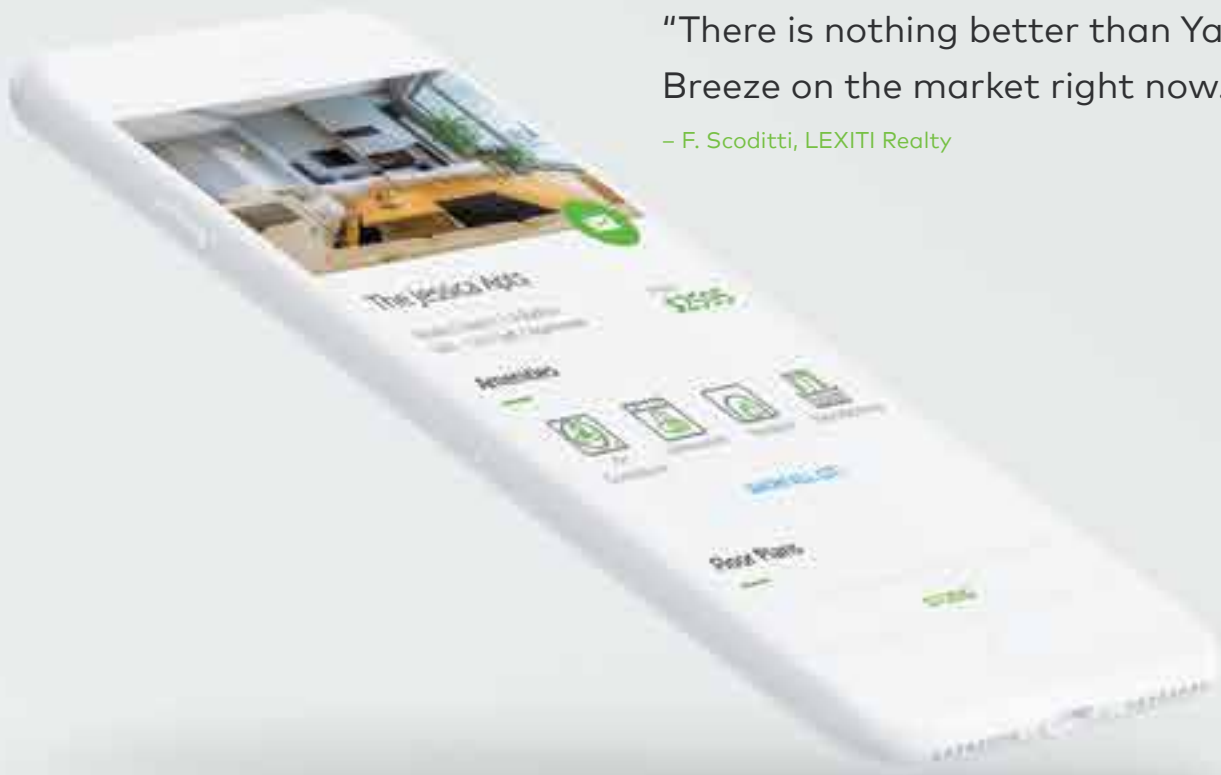


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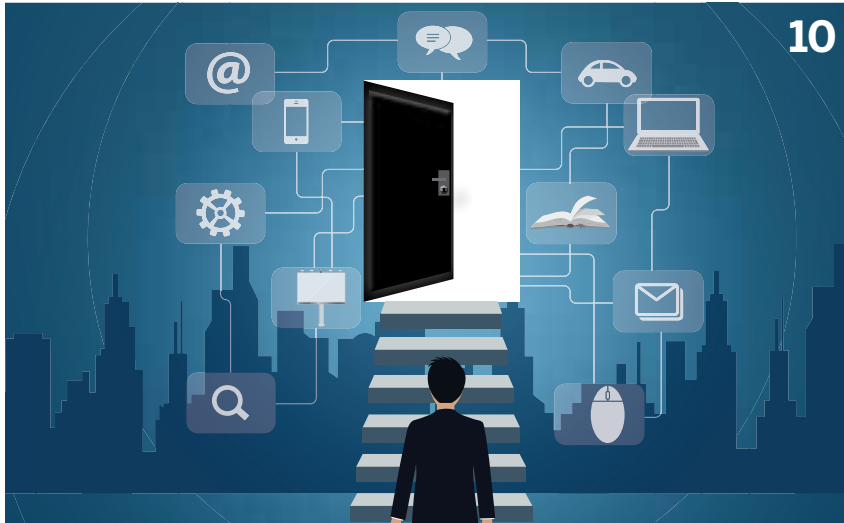




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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Looking Back, Moving Forward

BY **LORI TRAINER, CAM, CAPS**  
PINNACLE

In just a few short weeks, my term as president will come to a close and my successor will be sworn in at the closing celebration dinner of the FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show.

As I look back, I am grateful to so many people for their support and their efforts this year. Whether you worked on the bylaws task force, served on a committee or the board of directors, or simply attended an association event, you made a difference. I am pleased by the progress we have made together this year and could not have done it without you.

At the beginning of my term, I established two main priorities: to make the FAA board of directors more inclusive and change the perception that a leadership position with the FAA is unattainable, and to increase the role our supplier partners play in the FAA and the return they receive on their membership.

From the first board meeting I presided over, I encouraged participation and actively sought out the opinions of board members as well as members in the gallery. I wanted everyone in attendance to feel that time at FAA meetings was time well spent. Additionally, I asked the local affiliates to restructure their reports, creating a standard format. This helped ensure that all our affiliates, regardless of size, could have an opportunity to shine.

My appointments to FAA committees included members serving for the first time and at least one supplier member for each committee. That not only expanded the group of members actively participating, but also supported my second priority of increasing the role of suppliers.

I also wanted to grow the return on investment of all the support suppliers offer to the FAA. We truly could not be the successful organization we are without our wonderful supplier partners. To that end, the Product/Service Council sponsored our first-ever

reception for supplier members to meet and network with FAA leaders. The reception capped off a full day of two educational sessions — double the educational offerings of prior years — and a PSC meeting at the Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach.

As you probably know, one of my passions is expressing my gratitude by actively giving back. When Florida was hit by Hurricane Irma last year, the FAA gave back by making financial donations to the American Red Cross and to Hatching Hope, an Alabama-based charity that provides care packages to residents affected by disasters. This year, we took that support one step further and launched Hatching Hope Florida, and many in the industry have stepped up to help. Thank you to everyone who donated money, time, or space and to all who give back in other ways.

I would also like to thank my employer, Pinnacle, for supporting me during this year. Without the support of companies like Pinnacle and others, volunteer associations would not be successful.

Another goal this year was to touch each local affiliate either personally or via someone on the Executive Committee. I am happy to say that by the end of my term that will have happened. I had the honor to visit and see amazing events, swear in new board members, present an award to a state senator, and most of all meet so many of our awesome members across the state!

Thank you to the Executive Committee; to the board of directors; to everyone who served on a committee or task force; to Josh Gold, FAA executive vice president; and to the entire FAA staff for your hard work and professionalism. I appreciate every single one of you.

It was an honor to have served as your president. Together, we have accomplished a great deal, and I cannot wait to see the progress the FAA continues to make. ▲





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# A Healthy Team Benefits the Bottom Line

BY **JOSH GOLD, CAE, CMP**  
FAA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

**W**hen we bring out the best in our individual staff members, the entire team shines — including leaders. A quick search for “How to bring out the best in your team” yields 1.4 billion results in less than a minute, offering countless suggestions: Identify each team member’s strengths and knowledge. Establish clear goals and then let your team members determine how to achieve them. Put yourself in their shoes, and really listen. Be generous with recognition of goals met and a job well done. The list goes on and on.

But when a member of your team is ill, no form of leadership is going to bring out his or her best. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs — a common element of the study of psychology — builds the bottom of the pyramid with physical needs (food, water, rest, safety), which must be met first, followed by psychological needs, such as a sense of belonging and feelings of accomplishment. Anything we do to challenge, encourage, and reward our team members will be less effective if the base of the hierarchy is weak.

I’ve been thinking a great deal about the importance of wellness in the workplace since I found myself fighting a summer cold. Like many of us, I pushed on through my illness. I came to work, met my deadlines, led meetings, and kept my team on track as we worked together toward our signature event, the FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show.

Still, I wasn’t at my best. Now that I’m feeling great, I’m taking steps toward workplace wellness.

As executive coach Victor Snyder writes in *Forbes*, “Team wellness has been shown to improve a business’ bottom line. Employees who lead healthier lifestyles will present fewer instances of absenteeism, higher morale, and increased productivity.”



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## ENCOURAGE HEALTHY HABITS

- If you make snacks available in your office, be sure at least some of the options are healthy. Instead of bringing in doughnuts for a morning meeting, opt for fresh fruit and protein bars.
- Discourage employees from eating lunch “at desks.” In fact, encourage them not just to get up from their desks at breaks and lunchtime, but to actually get out of the building and take a walk (taking turns if needed so as not to leave phones unanswered).

## LET SICK EMPLOYEES STAY HOME

Enforce a policy that sick employees should make use of the sick time available to them. Several recent studies have found that more than half of American workers admit to going to work sick — even when they have a highly contagious illness such as the flu. Reassure team members that there will not be repercussions for appropriately using sick time, and adjust work flow among the team so the sick employee will not fall too far behind.

## ADDRESS THE STRESS

- Is it a given that “work is stressful”? It doesn’t have to be. Sure, there will always be peak times when demands increase, hours get longer, and employees turn to sugar and caffeine to keep going. But

if employees are feeling overwhelmed and anxious on a regular basis, ask yourself whether there are things you can do differently.

- Involve team members in solutions, and in decision-making overall. A lack of autonomy or control has been blamed for an increase in stress-related ailments, such as heart disease and depression. Encourage team-based problem-solving.

## DON’T FORGET ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

- Inform team members about available resources, such as a confidential employee assistance program (EAP) or programs available in the community.
- Assure employees that there is no stigma in taking care of themselves, and that includes seeking help with depression, anxiety, or other mental or emotional ailments.

In *Inc.* magazine, executive Susan Steinbrecher reports, “Studies show that even in market downturns, caring, health-promoting employers sustain the same level of performance as in periods of growth. This and other research points to the importance of balancing supportive management with health promotion and self-care.”

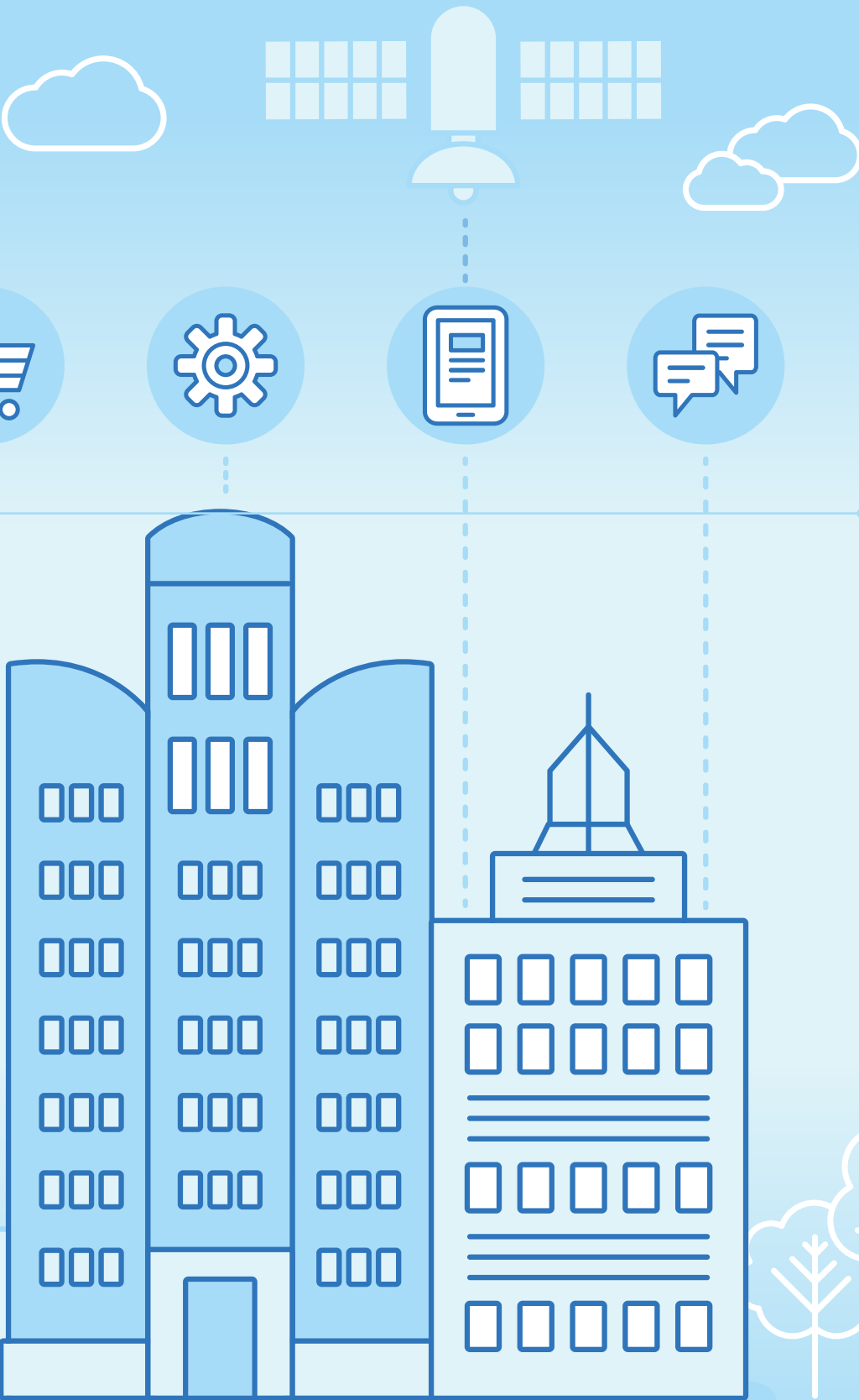
Workplace wellness may seem simple, but it’s important. Encourage your team members to take care of themselves so they can take care of business. ▲



# TRACKING THE CUSTOMER PATH TO YOUR DOOR

BY DIANE SEARS





## Multitouch attribution helps pinpoint each customer's journey to your leasing office

**“W**hat brought you to us today?” That might seem like a simple question, but...it's complicated. When prospective residents walk into an apartment community welcome center, they're experiencing only part of the journey of looking for a new home. The details of that journey have stumped community managers for decades.

Traditionally, the answer to the question has been attributed to the first place the prospective resident heard of the community, such as on a website or phone app that publishes multiple listings. But that first touch tells only part of the story.

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Why is that important? Because the missing information could be costing communities money.

Today, new ways of tracking how people reach a decision in the sales cycle are helping multifamily communities pinpoint how to spend their marketing dollars to reach prospective residents with the right message at the right time. Equally important, this tracking helps them avoid pulling out of marketing strategies that are working to bring people in the door.

The concept is called “multitouch attribution,” and the idea is to assign each marketing contact point along the customer’s journey a percentage of the credit for steering potential leads to the community. As the concept becomes more widely accepted in multifamily leasing, it’s expected to help sales teams convert more leads into occupied apartment homes.

“People are starting to think about apartment leads and the whole marketing funnel in a different way than we have in the industry in the past,” said Mia Wentworth, director of digital marketing for CWS Apartment Homes, which has properties in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia,

North Carolina, Texas, and Washington. “I don’t think it’s new in general to marketers, but it’s new in our industry.”

## UPDATING THEIR THINKING

Wentworth said she first started to take notice of multitouch attribution in the fall of 2017, when marketing colleagues in the industry began talking about it. She realized apartment communities have been behind the times in the way they think about traffic and how people are finding them in today’s digital world.

“Way back in the day, we had to rely on our leasing consultants to ask the question, ‘Hey, how did you hear about us?’” Wentworth said. “Obviously there’s a lot of human error that goes into that because they’re writing it down or maybe selecting from a dropdown list on a computer and maybe selecting the one at the top because it’s the easiest instead of scrolling through the whole list.”

Lead-tracking in apartment leasing has been evolving over the years. Initially, it started with designating a phone line for people who called in after reading a yellow pages listing or a print advertisement, for

example. Eventually communities started tracking emails coming in. The practices have been inexact.

“The way our industry has traditionally thought about a lead is the first point of contact,” Wentworth said. “So it goes into our property management system as, ‘Sally Smith found you on Apartments.com.’ She might contact you six months before her move, and she might go on to look at you in myriad different places before she makes her decision, but we’re just going to track her as Sally Smith from Apartments.com forever.

“When you think about today’s digital landscape, and especially online reviews, there’s a huge opportunity to track the whole digital journey someone uses to get to your property.”

The resident’s journey is deeply rooted in psychology and the familiarity effect, Wentworth said. “The more they see something, the more familiar they are with it, and for some reason they trust it. Sometimes they don’t even realize why. The marketing ‘rule of seven’ is not a new term. Film houses have used it to track how many times somebody has to see a movie trailer or hear about a movie before they go buy a ticket.”





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## “We need to make decisions to help customers proceed through their journey.”

### CHANGING THE CONSCIOUSNESS

In a blog post in September 2017 titled “Why the Multifamily Industry is Missing the Boat on Multisource Attribution,” industry speaker and session facilitator Holli Beckman, vice president of marketing at WC Smith, tackled the issue of why the current method of giving credit to leads isn’t working.

“For most multifamily marketers, our current method of attribution relies solely on the property management software to assign credit for a lease to an advertising source,” she wrote. “As it stands today, the property

management software only reports a single source of attribution. In other words, only one source can receive credit for the lease.

“I heard an analogy that likens this to giving only one swimmer on the 1,800-meter relay team a medal. That doesn’t seem reasonable.”

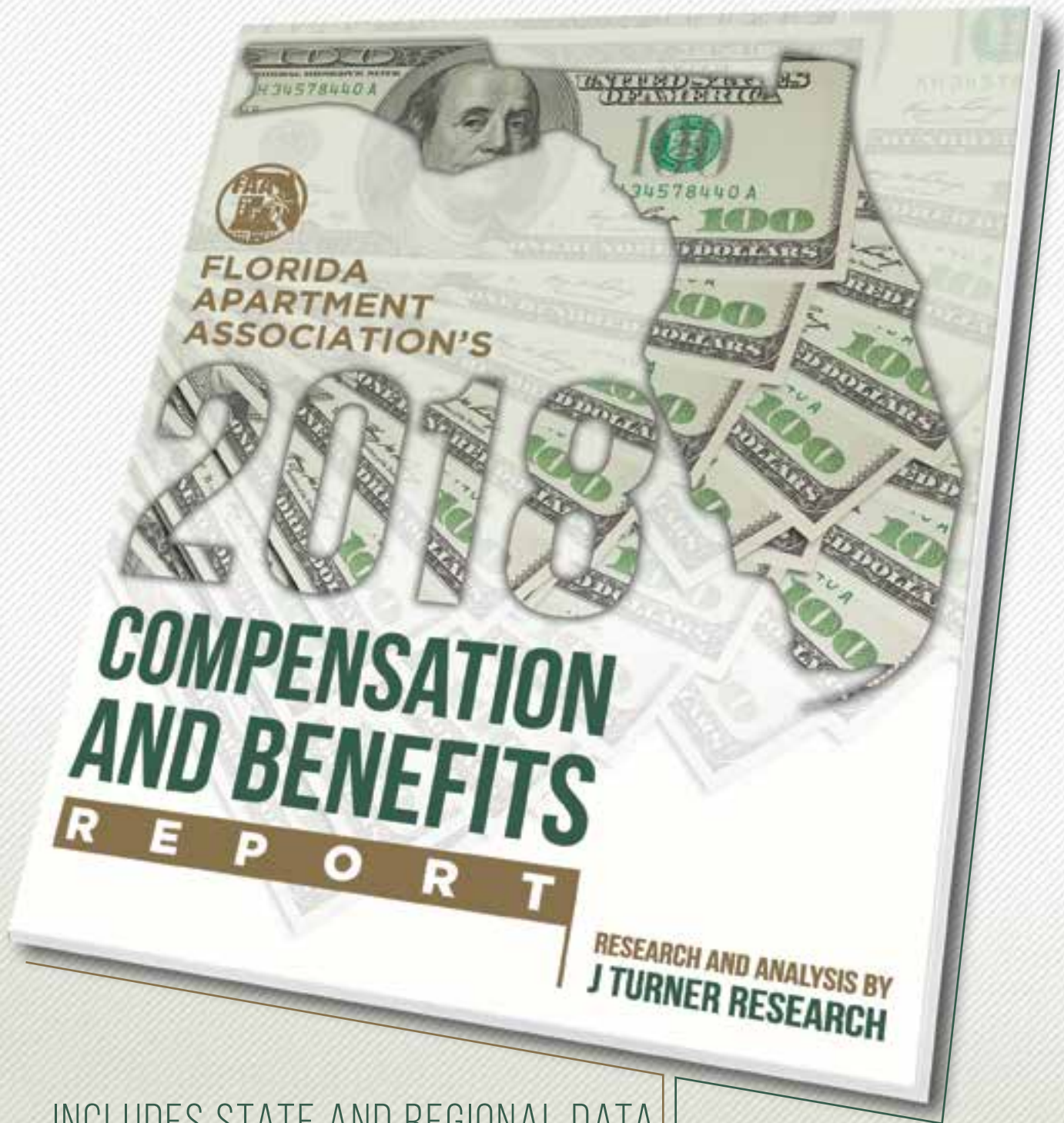
Beckman said 50 percent of renters visit five or more websites before they get to the point in their journey that takes them to the leasing office. She traced the steps prospective renters might take:

1. Conduct a web search for apartments in the city where they want to live.

2. See an ad for a multiple listing website and plug in the type of apartment they’re seeking. Five results come up.
3. Search a ratings site and eliminate three of those properties based on what other people have to say about living there.
4. Modify their web search to check for properties that accept pets, and your property pops up again.
5. Visit your website and see you have a special on the size of apartment they’re seeking.
6. Use your online contact page to set up a tour.



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7. On the way to the property, use a map program to find driving directions.
8. Call you to confirm the appointment and the driving directions.

With a single-attribution system, Beckman said, only the first or last contact would be counted. The others are invisible in the process.

A collection of online apartment guides for six markets across Florida has been tracking this phenomenon and putting figures to it.

“On average, only 4 percent of visitors who view an apartment’s listing on one of our ILS services choose to submit their name and number in the online form or call via the tracking phone number,” said Sydney Jamieson, vice president of operations for the ILS network. “At the same time, the average time spent on a page is two minutes and 21 seconds for those same listings.

“During an average week, an online listing could be viewed by 100 unique, individual renters who spend more than two minutes looking at the online listing, and that exposure would result in just four tracked leads,” Jamieson said. “As an ILS, we won’t receive credit for the other 96 renters who used our website for research.”

Multifamily marketing tools are getting more advanced, and the industry has seen an increase in the use of lead tracking systems for lead management and statistics reporting.

“The trouble is, when renters do not submit an online lead via the source or call into a tracked line, they do not show up on the marketing reporting, and multifamily managers are missing this valuable data on exposure,” said Jamieson.

## ATTRIBUTION MODELS

Beckman started studying the attribution concept out of frustration. She and a niece, who both work in property management, co-founded Apartminty, a web-based service that helps people find apartments in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. One feature allows users to search by when they want to move in, the way people search for available hotel rooms based on travel dates.

“What was happening in our property management software, and across the whole industry, is we were never being credited

with contributing to the leases because we were so far down the funnel,” Beckman said. “In our industry, what’s reported right now is only the first touch — that very top-of-funnel interaction, which is valuable, but not the end-all, be-all. That’s what got me thinking and talking to other marketing folks and going, ‘What are we doing here?’

“What I heard a lot from other marketing directors and vice presidents was the same frustration I was feeling — that you just couldn’t get the data out of our system.”

Beckman began researching the sales funnel and the different ways leads might be attributed. She turned to business-to-business marketing concepts and molded them to fit the apartment leasing industry. They include the following models:

**The linear model.** This is the one most people can relate to and wrap their heads around the quickest, Beckman said. It gives every source equal credit for the sale. If the prospect visited four sources, every source gets 25 percent credit. “This is a simple way to grasp the customer journey,” she said. “These are all the touchpoints the customer is making to reach the decision. This concept is easy to present to your boss.”

**The time decay model.** This one gives the most credit to the source closest to the decision. If there were four sources leading up to the final decision, the last source would get the most credit, with less and less credit given as you get further away from the sale. You want to see what source is driving the final decision or pushing someone over the edge to buy from you. This model is useful if you’re running a promotion on your Facebook page, for example, and want to give prospective renters the right message at the right time.

**The reverse time decay model.** This still spreads out the attribution over multiple sources, but the first touch gets the most credit for promoting your property’s brand awareness.

**The U-shaped model.** Combining the previous two schools of thought, this one gives 30 percent each to brand awareness and the final conversion. All of the other contacts in the middle share the remainder of the credit. This allows different property managers to decide how much weight to attribute to each of their marketing strategies.

**The W-shaped model.** This is the model that allows property managers to

consider all of the different pieces that fall into the customer journey. It assigns 30 percent each to initial awareness, first contact, and something Beckwith calls “opportunity,” or the tour of the apartment community. The remaining 10 percent split the rest of the attribution because they were important in leading the prospect to the property but not in driving the action of signing a lease.

**The full-path model.** This follows the prospective resident through the whole journey, assigning 22.5 percent for four steps: initial awareness, first contact, opportunity, and the application process. This last step might include follow-up emails or marketing after the tour and before move-in. All of the other touch points split the remaining 10 percent.

## CHANGING THE INDUSTRY

Global property management software firm Yardi introduced a new product this spring that uses multitouch attribution modeling. As more property management companies start using it, and other companies introduce similar software solutions, the industry will start to adjust, said Esther Bonardi, Yardi’s vice president of marketing.

She emphasizes the importance of tracking the numbers from the various touch points along the customer’s journey. If marketing executives can’t see what’s happening, they might decide to cut out all but two sources where they’ve apparently had success in attracting people to consider their communities.

That means sales figures will fluctuate because suddenly, say, five of seven touch points are no longer there. The community sees a dip in leads and isn’t sure why, and then it has to make up for lost revenue.

“We need to make decisions to help customers proceed through their journey,” Bonardi said. “If you only have the first touch, you don’t know how and where to help the customers continue through their search.”

Ultimately, this trend could change the way companies price advertising and marketing channels, Bonardi said. Right now, some that are effective are not getting enough credit, and others are getting too much.

“We’re on the edge of great opportunity because we have more information than we’ve had before,” Bonardi said. “This can lead to positive game-changers.” ▲

# LOOK ACROSS THE COMPETITIVE

THOMAS BARRAT/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



# INDUSTRY FOR EDGE

BY MARY SHANKLIN

**F**rom managing social media reviews to introducing bike shares, some of multifamily's fastest emerging ideas are being borrowed from other sectors within the industry.

Student housing veteran Mark Wilkie said conventional apartment providers can glean lessons from niche operators. Whether it's figuring out how to fund poolside barbecue socials or balancing must-have amenities, executives can benefit by looking at successes in other tiers of multifamily.

## STAKES ARE HIGH

A pipeline of 77,000 units in major metro areas throughout Florida has industry executives borrowing best practices. Trends transcend the price spectrum, aimed at everything from affordable housing to luxury communities.

As the state's population shifts more toward renting, Wilkie said, offering lifestyle and community is paramount. Management companies in the student-housing sector have been early-adapters, organizing social events to help retain residents.



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The same concept works at all levels of the industry, Wilkie added.

“It doesn’t have to be fancy,” said the senior vice president of The Collier Companies, based in Gainesville. New restaurants may offer a cooking class at nearby communities, and vendors may sponsor social events to meet prospective customers.

## MARKETING LESSONS LEARNED

Yoga platforms, fire pits, and auto-irrigated flower planters can differentiate properties without busting budgets, said Chuck Whittall, president of Unicorp National Developments, which has rental community projects in the Orlando area and in Longboat Key.

At his Drake Midtown mixed-use project in Lake Mary, for example, residents can play chess on a life-size game set.

Walkability to shops, markets, restaurants, and pubs has helped drive leases across metro areas. While pedestrian-friendly sites can fetch a premium, longtime apartment executive Lori Trainer said other properties can still compete.

“Apartment communities are using bikes — the bikes you can check out,” said

Trainer, president of the Florida Apartment Association. “Walkability is huge. What’s your walkability score? A lot of people look for that. Communities are also offering scooters that residents can take to restaurants or the grocery store.”

From student housing to luxury offerings, renters seek more energy-consciousness with programmable thermostats, LED lighting, recycling initiatives, and conservation certifications, Trainer said. Many of those features can also shave overhead.

Efforts may unravel with negative reviews on social media platforms. Shannon Claunch, marketing director for Gainesville-based Contemporary Management Concepts, said her company posts signs with matrix barcodes known as QR (quick response) codes.

Residents and would-be residents use their phones to capture the codes and download surveys. Claunch and her group use selected survey results for fresh content on apartment websites. The survey responses also help alert the management company about issues that need to be addressed.

“Text marketing” helped pre-lease a Gainesville student housing project ahead of the competition, Claunch said. The

management company texted prospective residents an offer: Tour the Courtyards rental community and get a \$5 Starbucks gift card.

Contemporary Management Concepts also targets its customer base with telephone “hold” audio that is geared to a target audience.

“An audio track may be jazz, blues, rock, or country,” Claunch said. “And writing a lively, branded script keeps callers on the hook if they have to hold.”

## NEW GUIDES FOR ASSET PROTECTIONS

The student housing world has benefitted from another practice that could translate to other types of rental housing — more regular inspections. Inspections are now at least quarterly, Wilkie said.

And while online payments have become the norm across the board, conventional properties see prospective residents shop for apartments online, use electronic keys, and “sign” virtual lease contracts — all features likely to find their way to more affordable and senior projects, experts said.

But online navigation requires constant policing. Like other industries, multifamily operators face security breaches.



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Data collected by managers can be hacked in operations with a lackadaisical approach to password resets, off-site file sharing, data shared on staff members' personal devices, Wi-Fi settings, and security of the management's laptops and smartphones.

Unverifiable data on credit reports has further challenged the industry.

Vetting prospective residents is almost impossible, said Michael McVety, owner of Fort Myers-based Realty Services Property Management. "There is no such thing as a national check. Short of you working for the FBI, there is no one true, reliable source for this information."

According to McVety, not only does faulty background data lead to managers leasing to the wrong tenants, but it may also weed out financially reliable residents.

Apartment managers should take the time to speak with current and former employers and get pay stubs for at least the last few weeks, McVety added.

## SENIOR DEMAND

The University of Florida's Shimbarg Center found that Florida's rental population almost doubled compared with the increase in homeowners during a five-year period that ended in 2015. The state added more than 800,000 renters during that time and about 460,000 homeowners.

With that growth, CBRE Vice President Shelton Granade said interest has piqued in the active-adult sector.

"That's kind of popped up on the radar in the last six months," said Granade, who has specialized in multifamily sales at the commercial brokerage. "The demand is there and occupancy is high. It may have been a niche that was a little underserved."

The pool of senior renters has grown across all income levels, not just the high end of the market, and has become the fastest growing segment of the rental population, according to RentCafe's analysis of Census data.

In South Florida, developers are marketing yoga instead of golf and tennis at 55-plus projects in Miami Lakes, Doral and Dadeland.

## TRICKLE DOWN OF COST CUTS

On the cost-management side, several developers in more urban areas have turned to new construction techniques aimed at

efficiencies. Tilt-wall construction systems have matured and help reduce completion timetables for the multifamily sector.

William Finfrock, president of the Apopka-based Finfrock design build group, said he has seen demand grow for dual decking systems that reduce change orders and gain other efficiencies. The product, he added, is aimed largely at hotels, apartment buildings and student housing with at least five stories and integrated parking.

"We are somewhat of a niche player geared to density," said Finfrock, who is

using the system at Broadstone apartments in Winter Park and student housing at the University of South Florida.

And in Gainesville, Claunch of Contemporary Management Concepts, said apartment operators across the financial spectrum can find savings by reviewing agreements with subcontractors and vendors.

Claunch said it's wise to stay on top of new products and technologies emerging in the market. "If you're a marketing professional and you're not annually looking at contracts, you're probably wasting money." ▲



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# 'Optimistic aging' changes today's senior communities

BY JON SIMPSON

For many people, the phrase “senior living” brings to mind visions of walkers, oxygen tubes, and bedpans. Senior living is the broad term used to encompass everything from communities for residents 55 and older to continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), which offer a range of options to accommodate seniors as their health needs change, from independent apartments to assisted living apartments to skilled nursing care. Yet, there are certain perceptions associated with this demographic that are ripe for disruption.

Baby boomers — defined by the U.S. Census as people born from 1946 through 1964 — have greatly expanded the senior citizen cohort, and they're bringing with them a new outlook on aging. Empowered by empty nests and financial freedom, baby boomers are embracing their after-55 years for the opportunities they hold rather than dreading the obstacles they may present. This outlook, coupled with buying power and declining mortality rates, has sparked a multibillion-dollar market for a group now being termed “active adults.”

## HOW 'OPTIMISTIC AGING' IS EVOLVING SENIOR LIVING

In 2013, Rohit Bhargava coined the term “optimistic aging” to characterize the new wave of excitement and vigor associated with the empty nester years and beyond. According to a study by the National Council on Aging, 89 percent of older adults feel

confident that they could maintain a high quality of life throughout their senior years — a statistic that's having profound effects on senior living development.

The gap between middle-aged adulthood and assisted living has grown even wider, creating a need for developments that support a dynamic and recreational lifestyle for older adults. These developments have come to be called active adult communities, or, as some might say, a baby boomer's playground. Active adult communities can range from age-restricted independent living communities to multifamily apartments that primarily target older residents. The common thread, however, is that each of these communities promote a distinct lifestyle — one that's oriented toward social and recreational activities.

Not only is this demographic evolving development trends within senior living, but the implications for marketing communication are changing as well. Even CCRCs are evolving their communities toward a younger, active adult, offering amenities such as movie theaters, pet parks, cafes, or lounges. With a more relaxed pace, leisure communities offer resort-like amenities and golf courses targeting an affluent empty-nester demographic.

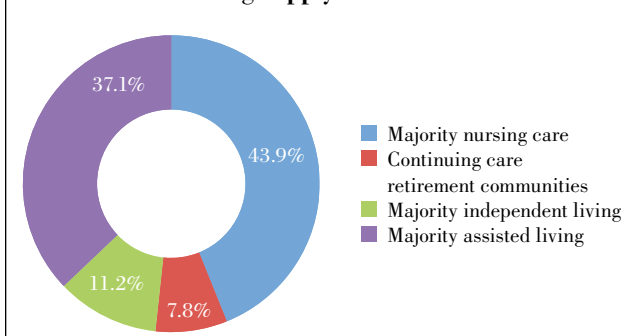
## DEFINING BOOMER CHARACTERISTICS

In the years ahead, senior living demand will be met with supply, and marketers will be tasked with differentiating their communities within a cluttered market. Before marketers relegate all senior citizens to a traditional marketing mix, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- 88 percent of baby boomers are internet users.
- 50 percent of baby boomers spend at least 15 hours online every week.
- 96 percent of online baby boomers use search engines.
- 95 percent of online baby boomers use email.
- 82 percent of baby boomers belong to a social network, the most popular being Facebook.

Baby boomers are looking for information online. Senior living communities that recognize this have the opportunity to be both a resource and a solution. For adults who are over 70, it's important to note that decisions are increasingly made by the children — often Gen-Xers — who are more tech savvy than the boomer generation. ▲

Senior housing supply in the United States



Source: NIC MAP Data & Analysis Service; Q2 2017 Supply Report, All Markets



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# SET YOUR APART



BY RANDA GRIFFIN

**A**t the heart of every apartment community are the residents who call it home, and the safety of residents should be at the heart of every property owner. Renters have a reasonable expectation of safety in their homes and apartment communities, and it's up to property managers to make sure residents' expectations are met and exceeded.

Protecting residents from potential theft, home intrusion or personal harm from another person is a big responsibility, and the way issues are handled can have huge positive or negative impacts for everyone involved. The best approach to optimizing security in your community is to be aware, transparent, and proactive.

## SAFETY STARTING POINTS

There are plenty of basic and affordable options for securing your community and individual apartments. Hector Rodriguez, chief of uniformed services at Critical Intervention Services (CIS), says keeping

the community clean and in good repair is the simplest and easiest place for property managers to start.

"One thing you can control is the physical disorder of the property," he said. "The broken windows theory says that if the environment is allowed to decay, meaning that you're not taking care of the property physically, you're creating an environment for crime to occur."

Removing abandoned vehicles, trash and any graffiti from the parking lot and amenity areas not only makes the community more visually appealing, but also shows that people are actively caring for the grounds and paying attention to what's happening.

At the unit level, installing 180-degree door viewers and maintaining locks on doors and windows is the foundation of safety.

Encourage residents to meet and get to know each other so they feel more comfortable and confident in and around their homes. Residents who know their neighbors are more likely to notice when something is

“off” — unfamiliar vehicles, people loitering, or unusual noises.

“You need active participation with your residents,” Officer Derwin Bradley of the Orlando Police Department said. “The more you engage your residents and remind them it’s part of their responsibility to keep an eye on things, the better and safer your community will be.”

When safety is neglected and a resident is injured or the victim of a crime, property management may be held responsible.

Staying on top of resident maintenance requests and complaints will help keep residents happy and property managers free of liability. It’s important to document all maintenance requests and address issues as quickly as possible.

Bradley recommends training your employees thoroughly on how to notice potential crimes. “Train your employees how to spot crime and report crime,” he said. “They should be looking out for people who don’t belong in the community and

making sure the people who do live there are following the rules.”

Simple features such as adequate and operational lighting in public areas can have a substantial positive impact.

“Lighting is big when it comes to liability litigation,” Rodriguez said. If a maintenance request is put in by a resident to address a burned-out light in the parking lot, and months later someone is hurt in the dark area, “there’s definitely some exposure there,” he explained.

## PREPARING FOR ACTIVE SHOOTER ATTACKS

**A**lthough active shooter attacks in the workplace are statistically rare, they can have devastating consequences. At the National Apartment Association’s Apartmentalize conference in San Diego in June, Master Police Officer Derwin Bradley of the Orlando Police Department and Chip Tatum, chief executive officer of the Apartment Association of Greater Orlando (AAGO), led two presentations called “Deep Dive: Preparing for Active Shooter Attacks.” The presentations gave tips for proactive emergency planning, what to do if you find yourself in an active shooting situation, and how to recognize body language or mannerisms that might indicate potential violence. They grew out of a similar presentation at AAGO.

Taking the proper steps before an incident occurs will give you and your peers the best chance of staying safe and calm during chaos.

### BE PREPARED

Here are some proactive tips you can use when approaching these potentially life-threatening situations.

**Develop situational awareness.** The ability to scan your environment while remaining focused on normal activities is situational awareness. Employees should be vigilant and mindful of what’s happening around them without it interfering with their work.

“In the military, we call it gathering intelligence,” Bradley said. “Basically, we want you to pay attention to your surroundings and what’s happening around you in the moment.”

It’s important to have a vigilant mindset that allows you to identify dangerous situations and potential threats by recognizing when things seem out of the ordinary. Bradley said it’s important to trust your instincts in these circumstances because if you suspect something is wrong, you may be right.

**Take threats seriously.** It’s important to know and recognize the warning signs of danger in any situation — or person.

“When you see someone acting different than they usually do or expressing violent tendencies, you need to pay attention,” Bradley said.

Co-workers or other people who enter your workplace and demonstrate aggressive behavior should be taken seriously and the incident should always be documented. Avoid dangerous or uncomfortable confrontations and report any suspicious behavior you witness.

**Form a plan.** Bradley recommends developing and practicing an emergency plan as a team so all employees are ready for potential danger.

“What I teach is to look at the environment and see how you can protect yourself while you’re there,” Bradley explained. “Ask yourself, ‘Am I prepared for a sudden attack?’”

### IN THE MOMENT

Sometimes no matter how much you plan for something, you can still be caught off-guard. If you find yourself in an active-shooter situation Bradley offers the following tips.

**Stay calm.** Situations can escalate quickly and easily become chaotic so it’s important to remain calm and act responsibly. Bradley said in any incident your

primary focus is your personal well-being, so your only goal is to get away safely. “The most important thing is coming out of the whole thing alive because if you can’t help yourself, you can’t help anybody else.”

**Assess the situation.** Each situation is unique and therefore requires different actions, so evaluate your circumstances and act accordingly. “Your first thought should be whether to escape the threat or stop the threat,” Bradley explained. “Ask yourself, ‘Can I get away, and if I can’t, can I stop it?’”

If possible, evacuate the premises, leaving your belongings behind and alerting people you see on your way out. When evacuating isn’t an option, hiding in an area out of the assailant’s view may be your best option. Try to barricade the door and remain silent until law enforcement arrives. As a last resort, and only in instances when your life may be in imminent danger, you should take action and physically defend yourself.

**Alert law enforcement.** One of the most vital responses to violent situations is alerting law enforcement. As soon as you’re safe and out of harm’s way, call the police and provide as much information as you can about what’s happening. The sooner law enforcement arrives and assesses the situation, the sooner it can be resolved.

Thinking about these dangerous scenarios can be scary, but awareness and preparedness can mean the difference between life and death.

“The biggest step in dealing with a major incident such as an active shooter is accepting in your mind that it could happen,” Bradley said. “You need to accept that it could happen, and it could happen to you.”



When managers make the decision to bring in an outside team for security, it's important to do due diligence and vet security companies carefully. Rodriguez suggests choosing an agency that conducts a threat assessment.

"A threat assessment is basically answering the who, what, and where questions about the property. Where's the property located, what are the demographics, what types of physical disorders are there? That allows our agency to offer the kind of service we think will be effective," he explained.

### NEW SAFETY TRENDS

A common safety technique used in many apartment communities is to employ a security guard, or watchman, to supervise the community and look out for unusual activity. Whether a 24/7 security detail or a single night watchman who patrols the area, having a uniformed presence in your community will make residents feel safer and can help deter crime. A security guard is especially beneficial in communities without a gated entrance or visitor check-in registry.

Rodriguez explained different communities have different needs when it comes to patrol services. CIS offers armed and unarmed patrols that vary in service and cost.

"For unarmed services they can range anywhere from \$14 an hour to \$17 an hour. For armed services you can get into \$16 an hour to \$23 an hour," he said, adding that private services companies provide a good price relative to law enforcement. "They'll cost you anywhere between \$38 and \$55 an hour, depending on the department."

A new trend in safety innovations is the use of call boxes, or emergency phones. The phones allow anyone walking by to make a call to a direct emergency line when they need assistance. The trend is already sweeping through college campuses, parks and other public spaces throughout the country, so why not take advantage of its safety benefits in apartment communities as well?

New technologies have expanded the capabilities of security services even further. CIS offers camera monitoring that can be done remotely and continuously. Actively

monitoring cameras around the property can be a daunting and expensive service, so property managers need to evaluate the role they want the cameras to play in policing their community.

"We have clients who say we want to install cameras, and my first question to them is well, what's the purpose of the cameras?" said Rodriguez. Cameras that aren't continuously monitored do little to deter crime and are only sometimes able to help catch culprits after a crime has occurred.

Stealth Monitoring is a video surveillance company based in Dallas that monitors security cameras constantly and in real time to help reduce and deter crime, property damage, and liability. The company customizes security plans, based on each community's needs and preferences, to determine how many cameras are required on the property and the preferred protocol for handling safety issues when they arise.

"We typically watch cameras overnight," said Tammy Miller, Stealth Monitoring's



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Florida account executive. “A lot of issues tend to happen when it’s dark, and when we see something suspicious we either call the emergency contact, depending on the customer’s protocol, or usually when it’s something more serious, the police. In doing this, we’ve helped a lot of our multifamily customers make their communities safer, and we help police make arrests.”

Speaker deterrents are often used when someone is caught in an area they aren’t authorized to be. The speakers sound out a warning message to trespassers and tell them local authorities have been notified. “A lot of times we’ll sound the speaker if we see something suspicious and about 50 percent of the time the person who’s doing the suspicious activity just leaves,” Miller explained.

Hiring, training and monitoring security patrols in a community can be time-consuming and costly compared with remote monitoring services. “When we compare our services to an overnight guard, we are on average 25 to 50 percent less per month than those services would be,” Miller said. “It’s a more effective method with generally less costs in security.”

Miller said the biggest benefit of monitored video surveillance is that there are eyes on multiple locations throughout the property constantly. “No matter how great the security guard is, they can’t be at more than one place at a time, which is how unfortunately things can get past them. Seeing more of the property at once is a huge benefit.”

## LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

It’s important to have a good relationship with local law enforcement and to keep up-to-date on crime statistics and incidents in your area. Providing this information to residents and being transparent about previous incidents or crime shows honesty and a proactive approach to safety.

Encourage residents to report any suspicious activity they witness to the police. “Always call us first,” Bradley said. “We’re out here 24/7. If something does happen and you don’t call — you’ll wish you had said something.”

Often, companies that monitor security work closely with local police in a cooperative effort to reduce crime. Whenever suspicious activity or a crime is observed

by Stealth Monitoring, Miller said, “more times than not, we’re calling the police.”

Local law enforcement can also provide safety tips and protection specific to your area through programs such as the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

## ASSURANCE FOR ALL

Innovative and effective security measures will make your property more marketable to potential renters and increase

the peace of mind of current residents. Making security a priority not only will make residents feel more comfortable, but it will actually keep them and your community safer.

Staying aware of local trends and crimes, sharing honest information with residents, and making the necessary security improvements are simple steps to take in the process of securing your community and residents. ▲



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# IN YOUR SHOES

“Community is a sign that love is possible in a materialistic world where people so often either ignore or fight each other. It is a sign that we don’t need a lot of money to be happy — in fact, the opposite.”

— Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*

BY **TRISH HARRIS**

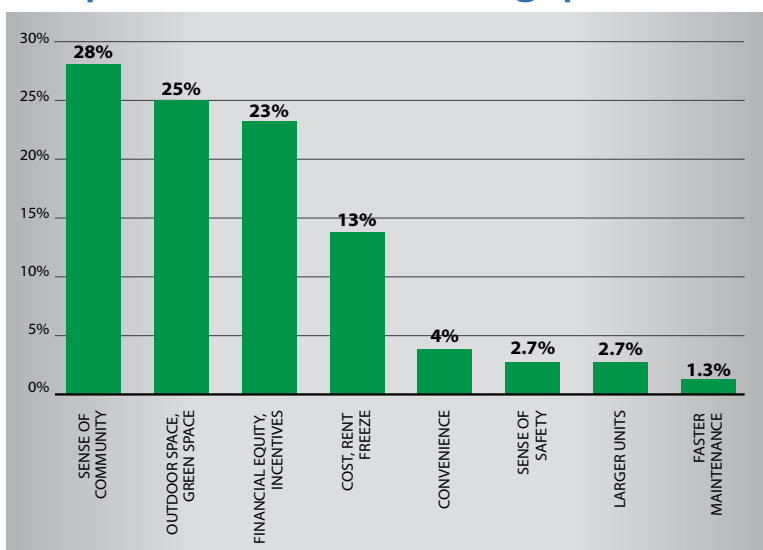
If you’re a typical *Multifamily Florida* reader, it will come as no surprise to you that most apartment owners and managers are justifiably pre-disposed to focusing a lot of attention on the bottom line — the efficiency of operations, the effectiveness of business practices, and the management and containment of costs. After all, these practices are integral to maintaining and growing a vibrant business. Not only that, but without them, few would survive, much less thrive. Even so, the most savvy business owners and executives in all industries understand that there’s more than one way to look at every challenge.

Regarding the multifamily housing industry, it is prudent — no, imperative — for apartment community operators to be aware of, consider, and respect the perspectives, wants, and needs of their residents. To help ensure sustainability, owners and managers must go beyond maintaining the brick-and-mortar plant to building a sense of community.

## WHAT DO MULTIFAMILY COMMUNITY RESIDENTS WANT?

A recent survey by Apartment Life Inc. listed a sense of community as one of the top three reasons

### Top reasons residents choosing apartments



Survey of current residents conducted in 2018 at Apartment Life Inc.





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residents prefer apartment living to buying a home, Jackie Ratzlaff, Apartment Life vice president, told attendees at the National Apartment Association's Apartmentalize event in San Diego in June.

She cited a separate survey that identified a poor sense of community as one of

the reasons residents find it easy to move from apartment to apartment.

### WHY IS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IMPORTANT?

The Ikeda Center for Peace, Learning, and Dialogue asked this question of

several people whose work involves community building for its website at [www.ikedacenter.org](http://www.ikedacenter.org). Among the answers posted are the thoughts of Frances Moore Lappé, author of *You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear and Democracy's Edge*.

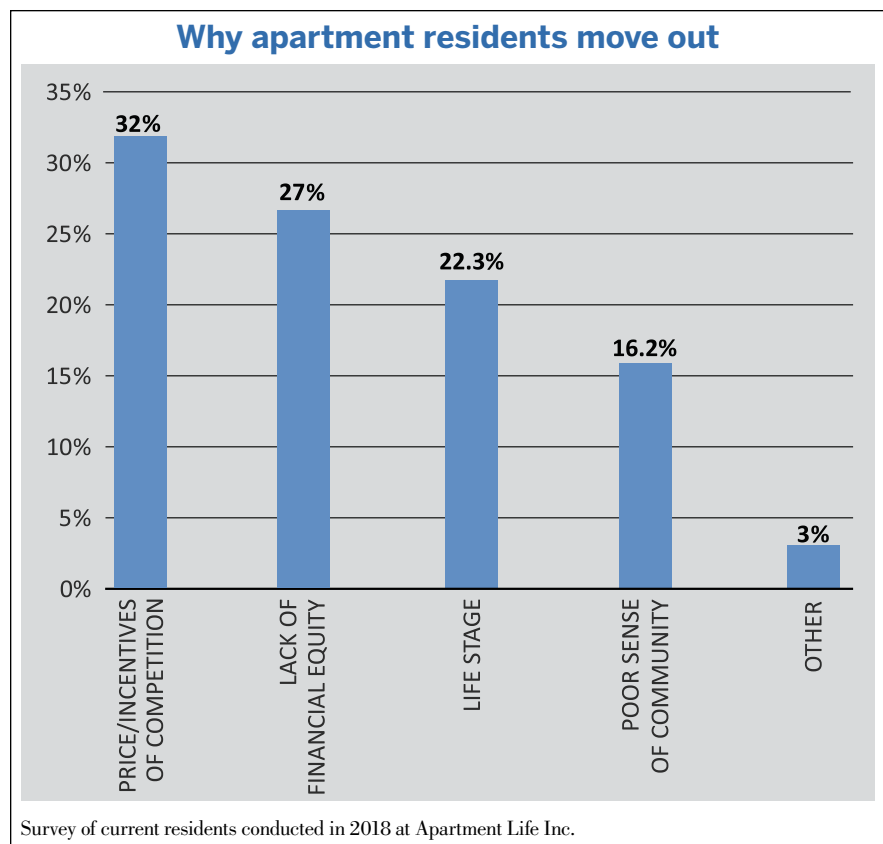
“Community — meaning for me ‘nurturing human connection’ — is our survival. We humans wither outside of community. It isn’t a luxury, or just a nice thing; community is essential to our well-being,” Lappé said.

The Apartment Life survey indicates that sense of community is critical to residents’ decisions to renew their lease.

### CONDUIT TO A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

If a sense of community nurtures human connection, it stands to reason that the converse is true as well. Human connection does, in fact, nurture a sense of community by building familiarity and camaraderie.

Multifamily living is particularly conducive to community — to neighbors knowing each other, communicating, socializing, mutually valuing each other, and watching out for each other. Organized apartment events are an excellent strategy for creating, encouraging, enhancing, and maintaining a sense of community. Although residents appear to understand this, many who run apartment communities do not.



Prospect rank	Aspects that impact a resident's decision to renew	Multifamily professional rank
1	Value for the rent paid	2
2	"Sense of community" felt among residents and the on-site staff	1
3	Community social media (Facebook page, etc.)	26
4	Appearance, condition of apartment	14
5	Community-sponsored social activities, events	23
6	Neighbors	6
7	Likelihood to recommend community to a friend	22
8	Responsiveness, dependability of on-site and maintenance staff	4
9	Ability of the office staff to hear requests and concerns	3
10	Prompt response by office staff to calls and/or emails	10

Combined study by SatisFacts and The Franklin Johnston Group: "What drives prospect's decision to renew." (order of importance)

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“In a combined study by SatisFacts and The Franklin Johnson Group,” Ratzlaff said, “prospects ranked community events as the fifth most important factor in their decision to renew, while on-site staff ranked this factor 23.”

Owners and managers should look at community-building events through the eyes of their residents. Understanding the importance of community from the residents’ perspective is the first step to realizing the many benefits of creating a sense of community.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Survey your residents to find out what types of weekly, monthly, and yearly events and activities appeal the most to them. Invite them to make suggestions and volunteer to help. This could take place as a community meeting or an online survey.
- Involve residents in event planning to build momentum, enthusiasm, and participation. Many residents have skills that will prove valuable in planning and organizing events and bringing ideas to fruition.
- Invite a team of residents to serve as community ambassadors to welcome new people and provide vital information and support on move-in day.
- Create an online newsletter with a readily accessible calendar of events within the apartment community.
- Design an online mechanism through which residents can find others with common interests and needs, such as a person wanting to carpool to work or a retiree in search of a bridge partner.
- Develop a list of standard events such as a monthly cake and ice cream party celebrating resident birthdays and introducing newcomers, weekly board games, Saturday or Sunday morning coffee and bagel gatherings, book clubs, art groups, bingo nights, and seasonal sports events.
- Designate a place for a community garden and invite resident gardeners to participate in its care and growth. Allow and encourage residents to grow and tend flowers in designated areas.
- Sponsor a spring cleaning day and invite everyone to enjoy a pool party afterwards. This helps to create community pride as

well as encourage participation in common goals.

- Conduct a “coffee and doughnut chat” with residents at renewal time. This will let them know you care about them and want them to stay. Use the time to check in with them on how you’re doing and what you might do better.
- Celebrate holidays with an old-fashioned cookout with hamburgers and hot dogs, along with children’s games like sack races. Residents can contribute

covered dishes and perhaps even entertainment.

- Tap resources from the greater community to provide educational presentations of interest to various resident age groups.
- Although events such as these require commitment, time, and energy, they are ideal for building bridges and relationships within your apartment community. Plus, residents can take on many of the tasks. Often, they are just waiting to be asked. ▲



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# Makeover at Mabry Manor

BY **RANDA GRIFFIN**

**A**fter almost 50 years of housing residents, Mabry Manor Apartments has undergone a complete makeover that has transformed its outdated appearance into a contemporary community focused on satisfying existing residents and welcoming in new ones.

Mabry Manor is managed by RADCO Residential, a management company that often purchases communities in need of an upgrade. “They bought this property knowing that it needed a little bit of a facelift on the outside and inside,” said Arial Pereira, property manager of Mabry

Manor. “It was bought with the intention to make those renovations, and they needed them big-time.”

Broken into two phases, renovations began at the start of 2017 and were completed in June of this year. Mabry Manor offers seven different one- and two-bedroom

*Model after*



*Model before*



## MABRY MANOR: FAST FACTS

Built: 1972

Number of Units: 372

Rent: \$695 - \$1,085/month

Location: Tampa

Managed by: RADCO Residential

Floor plans: Seven different one- and two-bedroom floor plans

floor plan options. The kitchens and bathrooms received the biggest upgrades, but no repair was overlooked. Even the ceiling fans and light fixtures were replaced to match the community's new and improved appearance.

"They're completely redoing all of the cabinets and countertops in the renovation units, in both the kitchen and the bathrooms," said Pereira. "They're resurfacing the tub and tile in the bathroom, and the



*Pool after*



*Pool before*



appliances are all going to be a new black look versus the white we previously had.”

The kitchen sinks were replaced with large and more functional stainless-steel fixtures, and each apartment got a fresh paint job. “Pretty much everything in the unit they’re gutting and then sprucing up,” Pereira said.

Along with revamping the units, RADCO gave the community a makeover as well. The exterior of every building was repainted, the clubhouse was upgraded, and landscaping was updated in and around the property. The community’s mature, large trees combined with the freshly planted flowerbeds and new mulch around the premises gives it a huge cosmetic edge, Pereira said.

“Some newer communities just don’t have the landscaping that older communities do,” she added.



*Kitchen after*



*Kitchen before*



Mabry Manor also offers numerous amenities and on-site activities for residents, including a new playground, three laundry facilities, and a gym.

“Our gym is completely remodeled, and they expanded it so it’s really big,” Pereira said. “We have three laundry facilities on-site, the pool, and then dog stations throughout the community.”

The pool at Mabry Manor overlooks a fully stocked fishing lake, which residents can access from the pool’s sundeck or a small fishing pier.

“They extended the deck a little over the pond so there’s more room around the pool

An advertisement for Suncoast Furniture. It features a logo with a sunburst icon and the text "SUNCOAST FURNITURE". Below the logo, it says "Manufacturers of Fine Quality Outdoor Furniture Since 1983 in Fort Myers, Florida". The website "www.SuncoastFurniture.com" is listed, along with the name "Harshad Bhatt" and phone numbers "239-267-8300 or 239-994-0547". A "made in USA" logo is also present. Images of various outdoor furniture pieces, including chairs and lounge chairs, are shown.

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Mabry Manor's renovated fishing dock (above) and gym (top right)



area, and you can enjoy the pond a little more," said Pereira.

Just a few minutes from downtown Tampa and Tampa Bay, Mabry Manor sits at the center of entertainment and outdoor recreation for families.

"We have a few parks in the area," said Pereira. "One is called Al Lopez Park, which is perfect for families, and there's a sports

complex in there too. We're also five minutes away from Raymond James stadium."

After years of tenant wear and the evolution of design style, it's easy for apartment communities to become outdated. Mabry Manor embodies how a little TLC and some practical renovations can keep apartments relevant and bring new life to older communities. ▲

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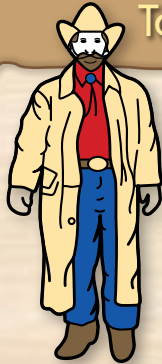






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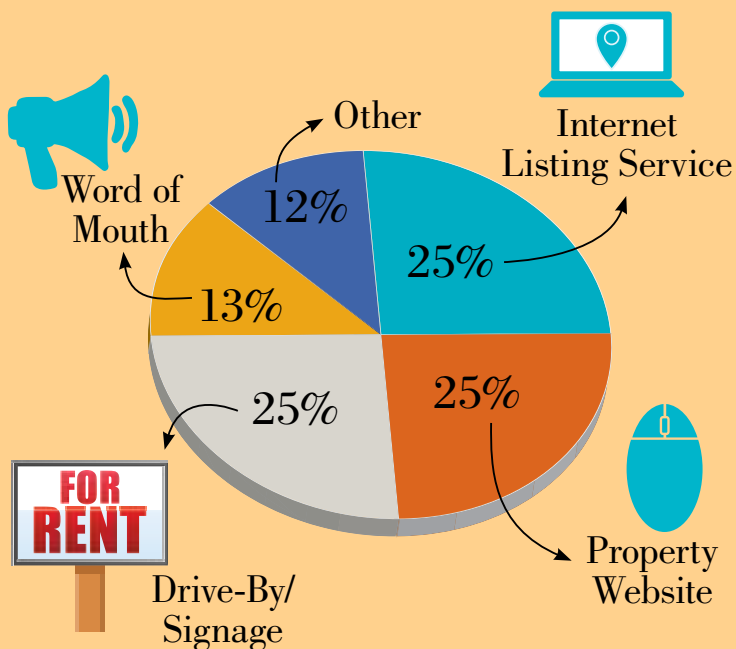
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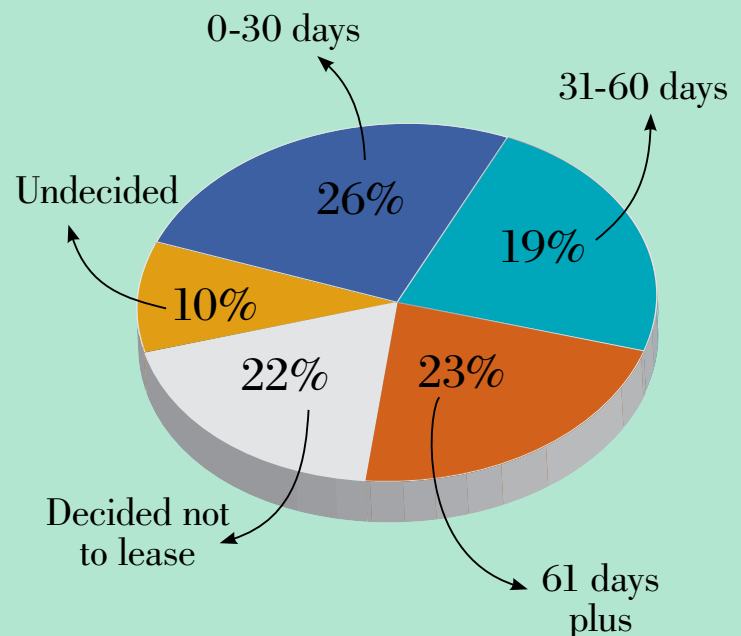
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Main traffic sources for prospective residents in Florida



How soon prospective residents want to lease at Florida apartment communities



Source: Resident surveys and "shopping" research conducted by Ellis Partners in Management Solutions (epmsonline.com)



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