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THE FLORIDA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

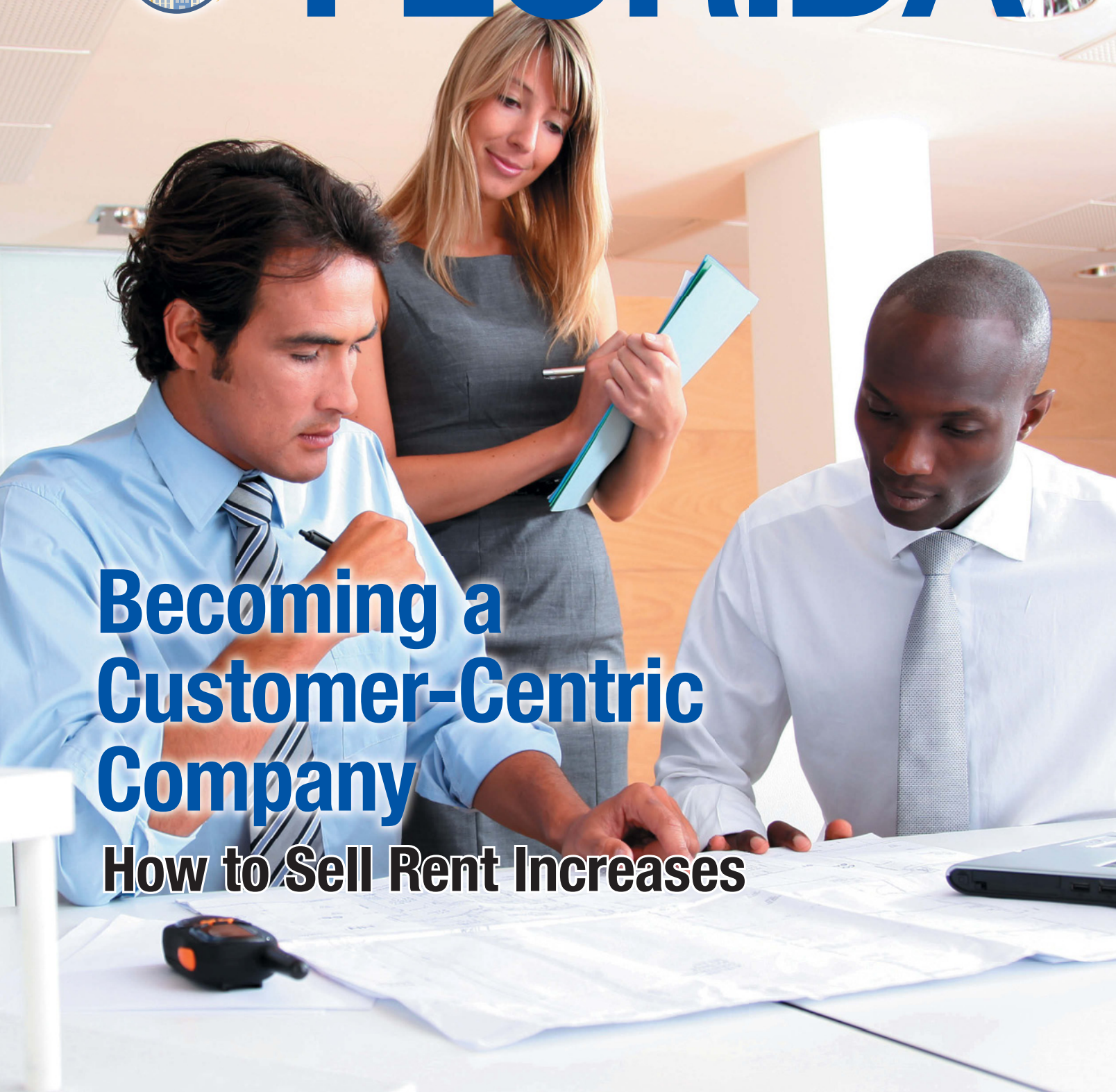
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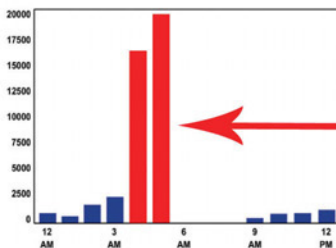


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October 10-12

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**NAA Assembly of
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PRESIDENT'S Message

by **Susan Truesdale**
Winthrop Management

Hello to my fellow members of the Florida Apartment Association! I hope you're enjoying some summer relaxation and not letting the oppressive heat (and rain!) get you down.

The National Apartment Association meeting in June took place in Boston, and what a fantastic meeting it was! Boston is such a beautiful and historic city, and our meeting hotel was first-class all the way. We had excellent attendance from our state and all of us learned so much in the dozens of education sessions from the wonderful speakers offered at the meeting.

Our NAA leadership and AEs had a wonderful time at a clambake hosted by the Rental Housing Association of Boston. More than 200 people took a boat out to an island to feast on the most fantastic New England lobster and clams with all the fixins. The food was truly delicious. They also had five or six different homemade berry pies that were out of this world. It was a great opportunity to enjoy each other's company and enjoy some of the "local color."

We had some nice honors for our state. In Maintenance Mania, Jason Frotten of Horizon Realty Management and FCAA placed in two competitions, while Agustin Salgado of Post Properties and BAAA won one of them. All of us from Florida were so proud to see Tracy Williams, ARM, CAM, CAPS, of WRH Realty Services in Jacksonville recognized by the National Apartment Association Education Institute (NAAEI) as its 2012 Professional Designate of the Year as part of the Paragon Awards. This is a huge honor for Tracy and the Florida contingent was very excited for her.

We also elected our new RVPs at the Region IX Business Meeting. They will start on January 2013 and serve for two years. The RVPs elected were Kellie Jackson of Milestone Management, Frank Barefield of

Abbey Residential in Alabama, and me. We look forward to representing our national and state association to our members throughout the region and working to set policies and devise new services and programs. This is also a huge honor for all of us.

FAA has gotten this year's Lyceum program off the ground, with 25 new candidates, 16 of them from property management. Many new management companies are represented, too. All around

the state, we are seeing new leadership emerge to join Boards of Directors and work on committees. I don't think our state and local associations have ever been more vibrant. I see a very bright future indeed for our industry and its apartment associations.

Before long, it will be time for FAA's own Education Conference. Please make sure to register on the FAA website and let's try to break attendance records!



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Why investing in APAC is good for your bottom line

by Laura A. Heiselman

FAA Government Affairs Director

It is often said that if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. In an effort to bolster our advocacy efforts, it is important for FAA to be able to participate meaningfully in the political process. APAC is a Committee of Continuous Existence (CCE) with a two-fold objective: to support candidates for state offices who understand the needs and challenges faced by the apartment industry, and to participate in issue-based campaigns with statewide significance.

Investments in APAC and FAA by our members have resulted in significant legislative victories and a more hospitable legislative climate for our industry in Tallahassee. Thanks to APAC, we've had the ability to support the elections of candidates who understand the needs of our industry. Rest assured, your

contributions are used efficiently and effectively. Historically, APAC has enjoyed a greater-than 90 percent success rate of electing candidates it has supported.

Our accomplishments are no accident. When industry professionals take the time to participate in the process, it helps to establish positive working relationships and enables us to effectively relay our message to lawmakers. With all 160 seats up for grabs during this next election, APAC needs to be able to continue to make a significant impact. Won't you help us today by making a contribution? To learn more about APAC, and to conveniently invest online, please visit: www.faahq.org/join_apac.

Below are some examples of recent legislative accomplishments with a direct impact on your bottom line. **Share this ROI with your friends in the industry!**

RECENT STATE LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

Legalized Early Termination Fees

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Defeated Amendment 4 on November 2010 Ballot

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- Defeated Legislation that would have added a protected class
- Defeated Legislation that would have hurt apartment communities in foreclosure/receivership

ON THE RADAR SCREEN FOR 2013 AND BEYOND

- Fixing broken regulatory policy (such as maintenance activity and permits)
- Fire code revisions (window retrofits and hard-wiring of smoke detectors)
- Onerous Landlord/Tenant Law Changes proposed by tenants' rights advocates
- Foreclosure Disclosure and Reform
- Monitoring for bills/local ordinances involving:
 - Immigration Reform (resident screening)
 - State Enforcement of Disclosure & RRP Rules (Lead Paint)
 - Bed Bugs
 - Local fees and taxation (Assessments and Millage Increases)
 - Recycling Mandates (Miami Beach proposing fines of up to \$5000 for mixed loads)
 - Source of Income
 - Premises Liability
 - Smoke Free Multi-Housing

Your membership investment in FAA is more important than ever, as we face some exciting, but challenging, new endeavors. Please contact Laura Heiselman, FAA Government Affairs Director /APAC Liaison, at 407-599-0679 or at laura@faahq.org, to find out how you can help us keep our momentum going! Join our efforts today by investing in APAC!

* Based on two early terminations per month and a base rent of \$750

** Based on two evictions per month

*** FAA/APAC participated in the "Vote No on 4" coalition financially and through sweat equity/human capital. The coalition included more than 320 organizations and delivered a resounding victory in the 2010 General Elections.



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Here's what 2011 conference goers had to say...

"This was my sixth year attending the Florida Apartment Association Educational Conference. Not only was it a great opportunity to network, but it also afforded me the opportunity to learn the latest and newest information about the multifamily housing industry."

Stacey Stuart, CAM, CAPS, The Bainbridge Companies

"I look forward every year to attending the FAA Education Conference. I know that I will find engaging educational events, a great trade show where I can find out about the latest supplies and services, great networking opportunities, and time to catch up with old friends!. The information I take back to my teams each year is invaluable! This annual event is one that you don't want to miss!"

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- Closing Session with the hilarious Joel Zeff. Not only will Joel deliver the keynote at the closing session, but he'll emcee our awards event and entertain conference attendees when he's joined by his "comedy team."
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Becoming a CUSTOMER-CENTRIC Company

by Christopher E. Lee
CEL & Associates, Inc.

When you subtract tenants, residents and shoppers from buildings, they become vacuous, static structures, valued far below replacement cost and serving no purpose. Take away the demand for new facilities, and developers become an endangered species. Remove leases, investors, lenders and building owners, and there is no need for real estate service companies to exist.

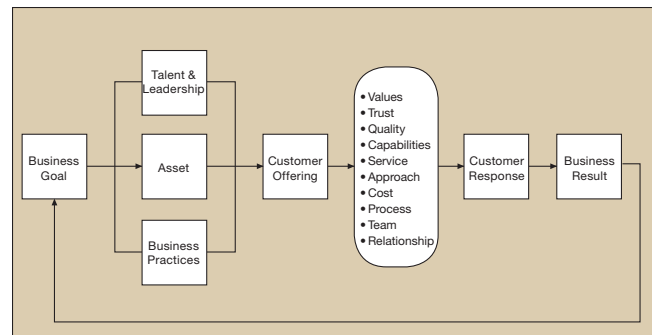
The common and unifying link between owners and operators of real property is the existence of customers. Buildings are merely repositories for customers in need of space or destination.

Services are merely a laundry list of skills needed to satisfy the requirements of those unwilling or unable to provide or perform such services. **Like it or not, we have entered a rapidly and radically changing business world** where customers, customer retention, customer satisfaction and customer recognition are absolutely critical to business success and survival. Customers are no longer the “necessary evil,” but have become integral partners in our pursuit of excellence and superior financial performance. Becoming an enterprise that attracts – not solicits – customers can and will produce robust and growing profits year after year.

Recent surveys have shown that **70% or more of the reasons a customer decides to go to a competitor have nothing to do with the product offering.** The vast majority of customers leave or do not select your building or your service because of perceptions (real, rumored or imagined) regarding amenities, the building brand, or the level and quality of services rendered by those they need to “trust.” According to CEL & Associates, Inc., **real estate customers do not want to be sold space to lease; they want to create and build a valued, long-term relationship with the building owner and, more importantly, the operator.** Peter Drucker said, “Quality in a service or product is not what the supplier puts in. It is what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for.”

For decades, real estate companies were primarily building-centric enterprises, guided by entrepreneurs and dependent upon capital. Success was measured in square feet leased, occupancy, effective rental rate, commissions or fees generated and market share. Success in the brokerage business was determined when a

“deal closed.” **Customer relationships were often defined in quantitative rather than qualitative measures.** Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, “Customer Retention Moments” **viewed customers as events** (a signed lease, development agreement, loan, contract, etc.). By the 2000s, some ahead-of-the-curve CEOs and companies began to put in place a “Customers First” strategy. **The evolution from customers-for-the-moment to customers-for-life is now well underway in many firms.** Mass customization and specialization is in ... one-size-fits all is out.



Identifying, attracting, securing and retaining customers is paramount today. Creating a customer-centered competitive advantage is an integral strategy within successful real estate companies. In this highly competitive marketplace, **business development and growth are contingent on a customer-centric focus.**

Now more than ever, success is measured by customer relationships, satisfaction and retention. The voice of the customer is an important part of every executive, management and/or asset meeting. The opinions, attitudes, perceptions and interest of customers now guide operating decisions. **Psychographic variables have become important as business variables.**

For years I have said **some of the best performance and peer group comparisons within the real estate industry can be found outside the real estate industry.** Why not compare and contrast the operations and services within the apartment sector to the hospitality industry? Why not compare

office building performance and tenant services to high-tech leaders such as eBay, Apple or Facebook? Why not compare industrial real estate properties and operations to FedEx, UPS or Exel? Or, why not compare retail center operations to Apple, Disney or Starbucks? **Peer groups should reflect who you want to become rather than with whom you associate.**

The rapid transformation of the real estate industry from a brick-and-mortar focus (the “four walls”) to an experience-based, expectation-driven enterprise (“inside the four walls”) is underway. Terms like “ground-up” and “deal-closing” are being replaced by “inside-out” and “relationship beginnings.” “Build-it-and-they-will come” has been replaced by “engage them and they will stay.” The struggle between operating strategies of “the-way-we-have-always-done-it” and “customer coherence” has begun. **Real estate companies are now “engaging” not collecting customers. Real estate operations are merely stages for performing valued services.**



In 2012 and the years ahead, real estate boards of directors, CEOs, executives and leaders at all levels must remove/eliminate the limiting operating and new business strategies and processes of the past. **You must focus on the intersection of what your customers want and need most and what your company does best. Customer service is not a policy ... it is a behavior.**

I want to frame the issue, opportunities and strategic solutions that result in best-in-class customer service. You can call this a “customer awakening” to capture and retain existing customer relationships. **Customers have become the currency upon which performance and future success will be determined.**

HARDWIRE THE VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

Is it possible to be customer-centric without the voice of the customer? No. **It is impossible to achieve customer satisfaction and new business success without a well-defined process that focuses the entire organization**

on the needs and expectations of the customer.

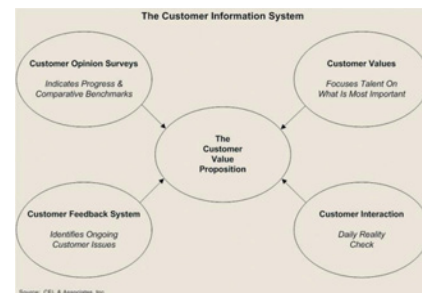
Perhaps the two best examples to highlight this challenge are found in management meetings and data gathering. How often in a management meeting (think of the last one you chaired or attended) does someone ask,

“How would this (decision or policy) affect our customers?” How often does someone ask “What would our customers think,” or “What do our customers need?” Probably not too often, if at all.

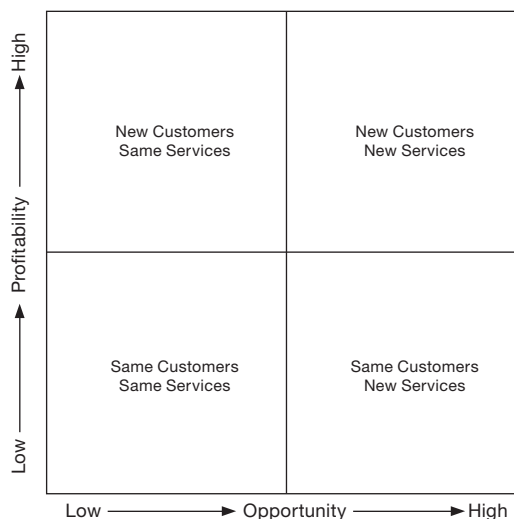
The second example (data gathering) can be easily seen in quantifying numbers of customers. Too many real estate firms are ardent users of historical, aggregate data that assume every customer is the same, with identical needs and expectations. To assume that all population segments, all age cohorts, all industry decision-makers and all jobs are the same is nonsense. How data can be collected on a customer segment without “knowing” the unique characteristics of that customer segment is a waste of time, money and resources.

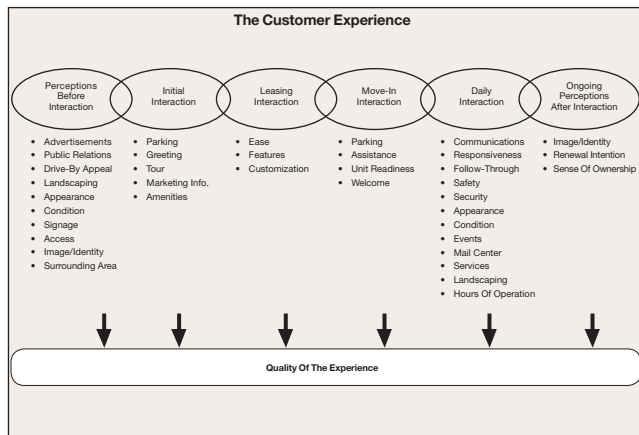
To hardwire the voice of the customer into your organization, you must first listen to the feedback and perspectives of your current and/or prospective customers. To understand your customers’ needs, wants, expectations and opinions, you should formally collect data from surveys, comment cards, focus groups and interviews. CEL & Associates, Inc. will conduct around 2 million customer opinion surveys in the real estate industry during 2012. Based on the many millions of surveys CEL & Associates, Inc. has conducted over the years, eight indisputable conclusions are clear.

First ... What you think is occurring or you think is the current situation, *isn’t*!



The Customer Opportunity





Second ... No two buildings, real estate companies or customers are alike.

Third ... Internal and/or self-generated surveys and “asking the Property Managers” provide inaccurate and unreliable feedback that often masks troubling situations.

Fourth ... Learning what the customer *really* thought cannot be determined casually or gathered internally.

Fifth ... Acting upon feedback can and does make a difference (operationally and financially).

Sixth ... Asking the *right* questions results in quantifying and learning about the customer opportunity in front of you.

Seventh ... Learning what is important to your customers can make the difference between winning a job, signing a lease or losing a customer.

Eighth ... Building customer relationships is a lifetime goal...listening to feedback assures a customer for life.

MOVE FROM POLICY TO BEHAVIOR

The need to instill a set of values, principles and sense of purpose focused around the customer is one of the most important factors in shifting to a more customer-centric organization. If customer service or the qualities of offerings are not priorities, an organization will not provide outstanding customer service. If ideas to improve customer service or customer offerings are rejected or given little to no attention, an organization will have an under-productive workforce. If an organization has to create and issue customer-based policies, rather than instill a customer behavior, the result will be disappointing.

Perhaps the **biggest area of customer service opportunity is within your company.** Over the past 30 years I have observed, heard and been asked to resolve the conflicts and friction between internal departments. The unproductive confusion and priorities between corporate and field functions, between accounting and everyone else and between vendors and the company is well known. The word



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“collaboration” and the phrase “we-are-all-on-the-same-team” are nonexistent. Serving the ultimate customer must be the goal of every organization. **Corporate functions serve the field, vendors are strategic partners and effective performance requires everyone to work together.**

Real estate leaders at all levels must de-program old habits, not tolerate rogue departments or individuals and build “effective influence” skills throughout the organization. But...**while you can teach customer service behavior, you must hire those who embrace and possess customer service attitudes.**

When an organization moves from policy to behavior, a great facilitator of that shift can be the organizational structure. **Today most real estate companies have far too many departments, silos and detached functions.** CEOs often have too many direct-reports (four or five is the right number). Organizational charts show independent boxes of functions. **Clarity of who has ownership of a customer, a customer offering, a customer relationship, customer communications and customer reporting is often blurred.** Have you ever wondered how many calls, emails and communications must occur if a customer has a problem, question or request? Who is responsible for keeping customer information and databases updated? Does the technology deployed include a CRM and client contact capability? Is the compensation and incentive system reflective of and in alignment with the customer service goals? How often does your organization

When Was The Last Time You Asked Your Customer...

1. What can we do to earn all (or more) of your business?
2. What measures will you review one, two or three years from today and conclude that our relationship/engagement was a success?
3. Who have you used in the past and what did you like and dislike about that company (or property)?
4. What top three business issues (for tenants or building owners) or residential factors (for apartment renters) are your biggest concerns?

Source: CEL & Associates, Inc.

recognize customer service excellence? Does your company have a clear vision of what it is seeking to achieve?

GARNERING NEW CUSTOMERS

Prospecting for new customers, new tenants, new residents or new relationships requires a focused sharp-aim approach. I have found that **“mapping” the business development process creates the most opportunities.** The first step in the mapping process is dividing your prospects into segments. Since customers are not alike, creating “buckets” of customer opportunities is a must. Every customer and customer segment has an appealing pitch, a compelling story and a perceived value solution. Each new customer interaction should reflect a great deal of rehearsal, research, preparation and knowledge.

The absolute key to garnering new customers is having the right talent in place. Remember, you are not “peddling” a product/service; you are engaging a customer and discovering the reasons he or she would say “Yes.” These are not renters; they are residents who call your “unit” a home. These are not

“occupiers;” they are relationships. These are not “shoppers” or “traffic;” they are destination guests. You must change your mindset, perception and vocabulary.

To create a new, valued customer relationship begins and ends with talent. When the belief is present that you and your organization can accomplish great things, your future becomes borderless.

You must become a “contact leader,” not a “marketer.” You must hire correctly and train constantly. You must “walk the talk.”

To garner new customers, you must first determine the desired relationship of the customer. Do new customers want:

1. **A Relationship:** This interaction is advisory-based.

2. **A Transaction:** The transaction relationship is often based on value.

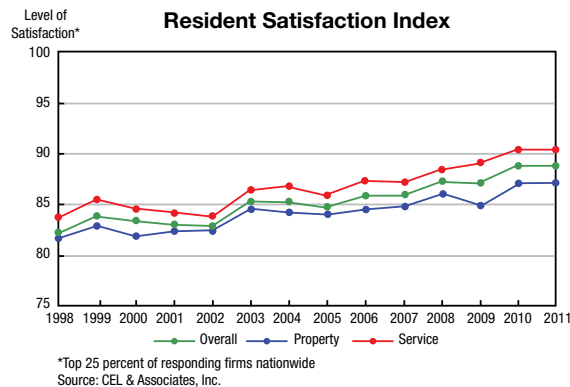
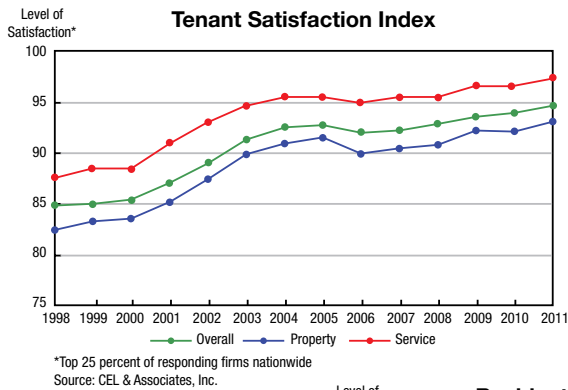
3. **A Partnership:** The partnership relationship is built on achieving mutual goals (e.g., a joint venture).

4. **Information/Context:** An information-based relationship is focused on insights and data interpretation (e.g., investments).

BREAK DOWN CUSTOMER BARRIERS

How easy is it to do business with your firm? How complex are leasing documents and rental procedures? How convenient is it for customers to contact you? How long does it take for your firm to make a decision? How easy is it to “buy” from you? How cumbersome is the paperwork involving customers and customer interaction? **My guess is that many of you have entirely too many self-imposed barriers to customer interaction.**

Customers are not commodities; they are relationships. If no barriers block those with whom you have a “great” relationship, why would that approach be different with existing or prospective customers? The success of any business depends upon how it treats customers. I have two favorite quotes from Peter



Drucker: “**The purpose of a business is to create and keep customers,**” and “**The result of a business is a satisfied customer.**”

STEPS TO REDUCE CUSTOMER BARRIERS:

- Discover from both prior and existing customers what processes, procedures or policies were difficult to overcome.
- Dissect each of your operating policies and reconstruct them from your customers’ perspectives.
- Assess best practices used by others who are inside and outside the real estate industry, utilizing those which can best assist your organization.
- Develop a process to handle and resolve customer complaints, problems and issues.
- Embrace and actively participate in a thorough review of your company’s hiring, training, compensation and communications practices.

WHAT CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING

The list below highlights just some of the hundreds of benchmarks and findings generated by the CEL & Associates, Inc.

REACT survey process, CEL & Associates, Inc. Research Department and proprietary data sources. If you are not surveying your tenants or residents, you must. **You will be surprised to discover that your customers may not be as satisfied as you think they are.**

- 47% of those aged 18-34 are “strongly influenced” by reviews and what companies say on social networks.
- 71% of building owners are satisfied with their service provider but are “willing to change.”
- 54% of smartphone users check products/rating reviews.
- 20% of building owners consider their service provider to be “Best-In-Class.”
- 47% of those requesting support or help want to receive assistance in 24 hours or less.
- 27% of tenants are not satisfied with the heating and air conditioning systems in their building.
- 70% of consumers use the Internet to find a business.
- 42% of users will share negative experiences online.

- 64% of building owners are “very satisfied” with the level and frequency of communications from their service provider.
- 73% of tenants rate “understanding my business” as the most important factor when selecting a Broker.
- 23% of tenants are not satisfied with the parking in their building.
- 92% of tenants think Maintenance is doing a “good job.”
- 64% of tenants rate “trust” as the reason they selected a Broker.
- 18% of tenants and 12% of residents are “not satisfied with the follow-up” after a problem has been reported.
- 21% of apartment residents are not satisfied with maintenance of the hallways, entryways and common areas.
- 60% of consumers would “pay more” for better service.
- 81% of companies with a specific, strong customer-service focus outperform their peers.
- 48% of real estate companies have specific programs on customer retention.
- A customer who is dissatisfied will tell between nine and 15 people of the experience.
- 86% of customers who terminated a contract, service or product did so because of “poor service/performance.”

Source: CEL & Associates, Inc.

CLOSING COMMENTS

In today’s highly competitive environment, becoming a client-centric organization is not an option, but a requirement. Securing new or retaining existing customers is not something to pursue, but something that occurs when you are fully engaged with a customer. What counts most in business is not what you do for yourself, but what you do for others.

To share your comments, insights or ideas, please email them to newsletter@celsassociates.com.



Train Your Team to Sell Rent Increases

by Tami L. Siewruk, Multifamilypro



Getting residents to swallow a rent increase has never been easy, but it's more difficult now than ever, thanks to today's economic market conditions. In order to successfully increase rent rates, your team must be ready for battle. They must understand why the increase is necessary and be confident in explaining it, over and over again. They must be prepared to resolve objections and show residents why living in your community is worth a little extra. In short, your team must be well trained!

START FROM DAY ONE

One of the most important things to realize is that the selling process starts from the first day of a new resident's lease. If you wait until 60 or 90 days prior to lease expiration to start selling an increase, you will have very limited success. Instead, you must build value throughout the lease term by delivering superior service. "Show value to people every single day, not just a month before their lease is up," says Joel Kaye. "Show them that what they're getting now is worth more than what they're paying, so they'll be willing to accept the increase."

That means that your staff must be well trained in the basics of good customer service from the time they begin interacting with residents. "You can't pass on a rent increase unless you've given good customer service," says Eve Bradford, President of Excel Training and Consulting. "So you have to train them from the beginning of their tenure that it's all about service. You do that through daily training, through interactions with the team throughout the whole training program."

Sue Garcia says that her company's training is premised on the fact that people will pay a little more for superior service. Therefore, on-site team members know that if they offer that superior service, they can confidently ask for an increase.

GET THEIR BUY-IN

You have undoubtedly had experiences with leasing professionals (to use the term loosely) who weren't really "behind" what they were selling. Perhaps you could tell by the tentative way they asked for the lease ... or the way their voice sounded listless and bored when they recited their apartment and community features ... or the way they gave up at the first hint of an objection. Hopefully, you've also had the opposite of that experience – the leasing person who believed so strongly in their product, who was so contagiously enthusiastic about its miraculous benefits, that they were practically irresistible.

In order for your leasing team to perform like the second type of leasing person, they must "get behind" the rental increase and want to sell it. The best way to get this kind of buy-in is to explain the increase to them. If you fail to do so, on-site people may view it as just another obstacle to their ability to lease and re-lease apartments – or as a misfortune for their residents. "Associates who are not educated in the financial matters of the property tend to 'give away the farm' on specials," says Amy Abdallah. "They extend apologetic empathy to residents and make the manager look like the bad guy, so the manager then has to blame it on the corporate office."

Show them why it's necessary to raise rent in real, numeric terms, not just in vague generalities. Share the budget with them to help them understand the economics behind the decision. "Give them a chart so they can see where the money goes ... what percentage goes to services, what percentage to maintenance, to payroll and so forth," says Eve Bradford. "If they understand how the money is spent, they'll understand why we need an increase." Eve also uses a demonstration to show team members what a difference a \$10 dollar increase can make. "Show them a formula for the increase, by unit, by month or by year. Explain that that's the cost of their newsletters, their moving programs and so forth, so they can see the big picture."

It may also be necessary to remind teams that you are in business to make a profit – that your owners expect to see a return on their investment – and it is the responsibility of every employee to make that happen. Amy Abdallah suggests using a training class that asks associates to meet ROI/NOI by forecasting income. "They soon see that sometimes the only avenue to increased revenue is in rental income," she says. "Making them do that really drives the point home."

The team also needs to view the community's rental rate in terms of value, not price. "They need to understand the value of the product they offer," says Carrie Morelan. "That it's not just

four walls, a floor and a ceiling ... it's the service they provide and what sets them apart." Sandra Barfield agrees. "Train them to sell value. They have to know why you're increasing rent and why you think you're able to do that, what you're giving the resident in return." Sandra suggests challenging the on-site teams to go back to their properties and discover for themselves what warrants the increase. This can be an effective way of building support for an increase on a community-by-community basis.

Another way of gaining support is to have property managers ask their on-site teams, "How much of an increase do you think we can absorb?" According to Sue Garcia, it is not uncommon for on-site staff to suggest an even higher increase than you ultimately decide upon. "When this happens, it can be very motivational for them," Sue says, "because they think 'If I said I could get \$25 more, and I only have to get \$15 more ... that's not so hard.'"

GIVE THEM THE TOOLS THEY NEED

Anticipate the objections your team will receive, and arm them with the information they need to overcome those objections. Some tools that can be useful include:

- A "cost of moving" worksheet that calculates all the expenses involved in a move: phone and cable hookup fees, moving truck rental, a day or two off work, security deposit, etc. Total all the expenses and divide by 12, to show that it will be more expensive to move than to stay.
- A "value by value" comparison showing how your community stacks up to your competitors. This is useful for deflecting the "They're charging less down the street" objection.
- A worksheet showing how expenses have increased. Collect data on your operating costs-vendor charges, taxes, insurance and utility bills, if applicable, and let leasing professionals use that information to explain to residents why the increase is necessary.
- A breakdown of the increase amount by day. Showing that a \$25 dollar bump comes out to just under \$ 0.85 a day is a great way to minimize it.
- A bargaining chip. Leasing professionals should have something to offer residents who are facing an increase. It might be simply offering to repaint and clean carpets, or to

replace their vinyl flooring or their kitchen sink. Or it might be refunding part of their security deposit for each year of residency. It doesn't matter so much what it is. The idea is to show residents that you value their residency and want to make them happy.

- Encouragement. Fielding resident objections about a rent increase can be frustrating, and lead to employee burnout. Be sure to have your on-site managers build in opportunities for "venting" and for morale building. Also, be sure your on-site managers know the importance of listening and responding to associate feedback. "Listen to your associates," Sandra Barfield says. "If they're getting stressed out because they're getting all these objections, the property manager must be able to act on that. Otherwise, you will get the burnout."

MAKE SURE THEY FEEL PREPARED

"I think the number one thing they have to have is confidence to overcome the objections," says Sandra Barfield. "You have to get them comfortable with what they're selling. They have to have that level of assurance to be able to justify an increase." Sandra says that level of confidence comes from being well trained in the basics. Her company accomplishes this through classroom training: supplemental, position-based workshops, weekly meetings of onsite teams and a two-hour "leasing blitz."

Sue Garcia agrees with the importance of a firm foundation in the basics. "Being able to handle the telephone, e-leasing, on-site presentations comfortably ... all those kinds of things add up to a leasing consultant's confidence," says Sue, "which will help them know how to handle themselves whether it's a big increase or a small one."

Sue also notes that one great way to build confidence is to let team members practice. "One of the things we do in the training environment is to let staff 'try things on' in a safe or protected environment," she says. "We put them in role-playing situations and let them practice handling resident objections. That gives them the chance to work out any kinks in their presentation and feel comfortable with it, because if they're not comfortable doing it in real life, they won't be able to."

Your community's continued success depends on receiving the maximum return on your investment. Selling a rent increase is a tough job, but a solid strategy that brings your team on board from the start will make it much easier. Start from day one. Get your team's buy-in, give them the tools they need and make sure

they feel prepared. The best sales tool you can possibly have is a team that's totally sold on the idea they're tasked with selling!

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APARTMENT INDUSTRY HELPS FAA Housing the Homeless Initiative Update

In April, New Moves formed a partnership with Hospitality Helps, a new initiative led by Westgate Resorts Foundation, in conjunction with other hospitality partners (resorts and theme parks), whereby they leverage the large number of open entry-level positions with the homeless population seeking employment. Through this partnership with Southern Affordable Services, Inc. (SAS), we are able to address homelessness through a more holistic approach, providing not only shelter, but employment as well, thereby paving the way to self-sufficiency.

We put this partnership to work recently while moving in our 89th family. Through this partnership, Amy Larson was able to gain employment with Westgate Resorts as a lead hostess in a restaurant and moved into a three-bedroom apartment through Concord Management Limited, allowing her family of five to leave the motel that had become her home.

“It’s the worst thing in the world when you don’t know what you are going to do next, so it’s a big weight off my shoulders,” explained Larson. Their homeless situation was the result of Amy’s husband becoming too sick to work. It was hard for her to find work too until now.

Amy’s story caught the attention of WFTV News in Orlando. As featured on the news story, others came to Amy’s aid as well. CORT Furniture donated brand new beds for each family member, and First Baptist of Orlando’s “Love Orlando” paid the utility deposit for the apartment home.

Lori Trainer of Southern Affordable Services said, “If you don’t have a home, you can’t have a stable environment for your family, and if you don’t have a job, you can’t support the home.”

Westgate and Concord Properties held a community-wide event in May to get more companies and organizations on board with the program.

Know a Veteran in Danger of Becoming Homeless?

Pass Along This Information

by Gloria Shanahan,
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Housing vouchers known as **HUD-VASH** can help veterans resolve their housing situation if they are in danger of becoming homeless. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are working together to provide the fastest and most complete service possible to those who served our country who now need housing assistance.

The first step is to locate the VA center closest to you, register and explain your circumstances. If you are a low-income veteran, the VA will refer you to the local housing authority nearest you that received HUD VASH vouchers. These are housing vouchers



funded by HUD, coordinated by the VA and administered by local housing agencies that allow you to live in the place of your choice.

The basic eligibility requirements are determined initially by the VA, as the veteran must be eligible for medical services from the organization and his or her economic situation should be classified under the definition of homeless as defined by law.

The person must participate actively in obtaining services to help to stabilize his or her situation. A requirement for participation is to accept the assistance of a social worker to help

Continued on page 26



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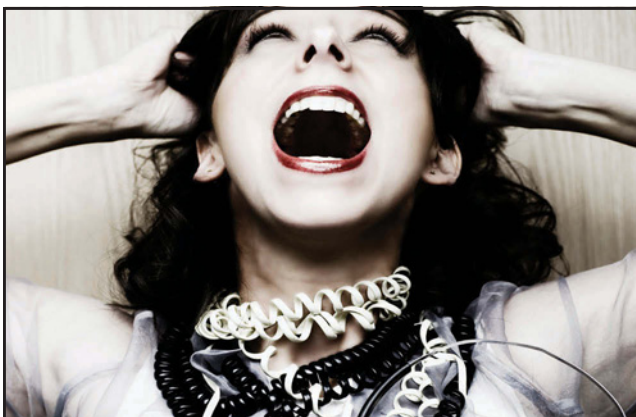


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Continued from page 18

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