



Onsite
Solutions

A Moving Experience

By LISA TROSIEN

Ask anyone about the last time they had to move and you will generally receive a groan or two, at least one genuine complaint and quite often, a horror story. A recent article in *Fast Company* detailed the working life of a relocation expert. The story was about a transferred executive who showed up at his new apartment at midnight to find it missing its front door. While the article didn't go into great specifics, it sounds fair to say there was some miscommunication between the apartment community and the executive.

A recent study of residents by J.D. Powers and Associates found out what many of us already knew: The move-in experience is critical in building and maintaining a successful and happy relationship with a resident. And even though we've known this for years, we haven't done much about it. It's time to rectify that situation.

Treat the Move-in like a Real Estate Closing

Papers should be neatly presented in an attractive folder, clearly and well-detailed with the resident's name and new address. Each document should be clearly explained and identified in the signing process. Archstone Communities has done an excellent job with their move-in folder. Not only is it



extremely functional, but it also contains items, such as a full explanation of their highly successful Seal of Service campaign. Coupons for carpet cleaning and other services are included, along with a refrigerator magnet detailing the Seal of Service, contact numbers and e-mail addresses.

Prepare the Apartment in More

Ways than Just Painting and Cleaning.

The days of "paint the box, clean the box, move 'em in, move 'em out" are long over. Apartment homes should have the temperature adjusted for a comfortable move-in (Have you ever moved into a third floor apartment in July when the interior temperature was hotter than the 90 degrees outside?). This means air conditioning on warm

days and heat on cold days.

Provide toilet paper, paper towels, soap, fresh ice, facial tissue and a shower curtain as a standard part of your “prep package.” If

great move-in gift.

Reserve Parking for their Moving Van the Evening Before

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you’re still providing gift wrapped toilet tissue as a move-in gift, consider giving it to your spouse, partner or significant other on their birthday. Gauge their reaction to it and then maybe you’ll see how your residents feel about receiving it.

Consider a Move-in Menu where residents can select their choices of soda, deli meats, bread, condiments, cookies and other small pantry-type food items so their fridge and cupboards are partially stocked on move-in day. Let them make their choices from a prepared menu; in this day of personalization, this is perhaps the ultimate move-in convenience gift.

Provide a Quality Move-in Gift

While stories abound of companies that use their leftovers from the company picnic as move-in gifts (Really, who would want a plastic visor with the name of their community’s management company on it?) to the property that was told by their supervisor that a two-liter bottle of soda (off brand soda, no less) was plenty for a move-in gift, it’s time to loosen the purse strings. Think about it; even with an average rent of \$500 per month, your resident is giving you \$6,000 each year in rental dollars. Just 0.5 percent, or \$30, would buy a

Ever had to park a block or two away from your doorway on moving day? It’s no fun. Block off two spaces immediately in front of the building doors with signage that says, “Reserved for Your New Neighbor’s Moving Van.” If you do some preliminary notifications of this new service to your existing residents, you shouldn’t have much of a problem instituting this service.

Stop by and Check on the New Resident During their Move-in

It’s a simple courtesy call to make sure everything is going smoothly within the apartment. Wouldn’t you rather know about any problems sooner rather than later so that you can make an immediate repair? And don’t arrive empty-handed either; a small bouquet of colorful flowers in an inexpensive clear glass vase is bound to make someone feel good.

Think about the last time you moved and how it could have been improved.

You’ll undoubtedly come up with lots of ways to improve your community’s move-in experience. One more thing . . . make sure the apartment has a door on it! ■

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