



Onsite Solutions

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It's a Neighborly Day in the Neighborhood

Today's renters, according to the online rental service, Viva.com, are savvy, time-starved and solution-oriented. Is your leasing team prepared to lease to today's renters, or are they still trying to lease to yesterday's renters?

Renters today need leasing professionals that know as much as there is to know about not only their apartment and the apartment community, but about the neighborhood itself. How well prepared is your team? Ask them these questions:

1. Have they visited the local schools so they can describe them to their prospects? Do they know things about them, like the average student-teacher ratio? Do their residents' children attend morning or afternoon kindergarten?
2. Where is the closest urgent care facility? What are the hours? Where is the nearest hospital emergency room?
3. Where are the closest day care centers? What are their fees?
4. Where can you buy holiday items, such as pumpkins? Where is the closest place you can cut down a live Christmas tree?
5. Which nearby gasoline station has the lowest cost per gallon? Where can you get your car washed and your gasoline at the same time? Where is the closest oil change facility?
6. If your community doesn't

recycle, where can you take your recyclable items? How can you dispose of hazardous materials, such as paint and cleaning fluids?

7. What are the requirements to receive a library card? Where is the closest library? What are the hours?
8. Where can you take a class or two in pottery, painting, dance, a foreign language or ballroom dancing?
9. How do you get to a train, bus or other form of city transportation? How does the system work? Where does it go? What does it cost?
10. Can you sign up to be an organ donor when you get your new driver's license? What proof of residency do you need when you sign up? Where is the closest facility? What is the best time of day to go?

Clearly, your staff should know the answers to these types of questions. But neighborhood knowledge goes further than just knowing the how, where and what. Neighborhood knowledge should cover the entire housing market in your area as well.

We've all been competing with single family houses and condominiums for years. But has your team really been instructed on how to sell apartments to a house-buying market? Does your team know:

1. How mortgages work?
2. The current average rate for a

- fixed or adjustable mortgage?
3. How mortgage rates affect their prospects?
4. The typical tax bill for a home in their neighborhood?
5. The average length of time a home is on their market in their neighborhood before it sells?

All of these aforementioned items are highly relevant with today's renter. In the event that a prospect is considering a house, a well prepared leasing professional should be able to discuss the advantages of leasing over purchasing in greater detail than simply discussing the maintenance-free lifestyle.

Leasing professionals have to be prepared for every type of prospect, whether they are time-starved, solution-oriented or savvy. Make sure you provide them with the tools to do the best job they possibly can. ■

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