



Onsite Solutions

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Let's Go Shopping

BY LISA TROSIEN

Shopping apartment communities is always an eye-opening experience for anyone, regardless of the market in which they are located. Where else can you have wonderful, mediocre and downright awful experiences in the space of a few short hours?

While shopping services perform a much-needed service to our industry, nothing opens your own eyes like shopping some communities yourself.

On recent shopping trips throughout the United States and Canada, the following events took place:

1. When notifying the leasing professional that I was “shopping the competition” and wasn’t a bona fide prospect, I was handed the keys and given directions to the model apartment home. (I’m still not sure if these were master keys or not.) I was never asked for identification either, although the signage clearly stated that photo identification was required to view an apartment home.

2. After being asked my name during the Welcome Card process, the leasing professional proceeded to use my name no less than seven times before we left the leasing center (I counted). It was extremely annoying.

3. Upon entering the office, I was asked by the leasing professional if I was there to apply for the housekeeping job. (Although I was not professionally dressed, clearly the leasing professional had decided that I could not

afford the rent.)

4. Arriving at a leasing office without a pre-arranged appointment, I was informed that the tours were by “appointment only” and I couldn’t be shown anything at that time. I asked if I could make an appointment for a tour later that day—the leasing professional told me to call her later and she would see what she had available.

5. During the demonstration of an apartment home, I pointed out an adjacent building (visible from the balcony) to the leasing professional. “What’s that?” I asked. “I don’t know,” she replied. “I’ve worked here for two years and I have no idea what that is.”

6. While viewing a fully renovated apartment home, I mentioned to the leasing professional that it (the apartment) looked brand new. Her response, “Oh it is. You should have seen what it looked like right after we evicted the gang member that lived here.”

7. After being informed that the total move-in monies required from me to reserve an apartment home would be approximately three thousand dollars, the leasing professional told me that if I leased “that day” she could discount my move in fees by fifty dollars. Fifty dollars off of three thousand? Was that really supposed to create some sort of urgency on my part? I felt sorry for her that she had to offer me something that was almost laughable.

8. The behavior of the leasing professionals wasn’t the only

thing that needed some adjusting. Some other areas in need of improvement were:

- cleaner common areas (the sleeves of my jacket actually stuck to the tabletop in one leasing office—they hadn’t wiped up some spilled soda from their lunch),
- better refreshments (or at least some variety ... you can only eat cookies and drink lemonade for just so long on a day of shopping),
- a serious consideration of either a dress code or a career apparel program, and
- improved signage (sometimes its tough to find the leasing center, especially when it is in an apartment).

Let’s you think that there are no truly excellent leasing professionals out there, take heart. The last community I visited that week had an outstanding leasing professional. Her demeanor was friendly, professional and eager. She was interested in my needs and tried her best to find an apartment home for me. Her career apparel was impeccable—and so was her community. So Jennifer in Arizona, if you are reading this, you’re terrific! ■