

Top Three Tips for Utilizing Social Media in the Multifamily Industry



Social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter have really transformed the internet. These sites have allowed individuals (including renters) to go from being content consumers to content producers. How are our residents and prospective residents using social media? And what can apartment managers do to tap into and leverage these platforms?

1. Listen: What are people talking about?

Good or bad, social media sites allow users to voice their opinions and share information. These venues are an opportunity for you to gain insight into the thoughts of your residents and prospective residents. It is possible that your community is a topic of discussion in these public online forums. If so, it's advantageous to be in the know and to have a strategy for monitoring the online conversation.

Social media monitoring tools will help you track the social media content that is of value to you. Here are some free and easy-to-use tools you can use to monitor what is being said about your company and communities on the web.

Google - [Google Alerts](#) is a free tool that tracks online discussions related to specified keywords and provides you with email updates when those keywords appear on social media sites or online discussions. We recommend setting Google alerts for your property management company name, community names, and your website address. You can also create search strings such as "moving to (City, State)" to help you locate where prospects are starting discussions.

Twitter - Twitter enables its users to send and read messages known as "tweets." Tweets are brief posts and are delivered to the author's subscribers, known as followers. [Twitter Search](#) and [Tweet Scan](#) are helpful tools that allow you to search all Twitter posts. [TweetDeck](#) is a personal browser that allows you to review all of your Twitter information in one place - you can quickly create columns to view updates of your followers, mentions of your tweets, saved searches and more. It also will inform you throughout the day of new tweets that are relevant to your business with a quick pop-up notification.

- Participate: Contribute to conversations started by others.** Once you set up the tools to listen to your target audience, the rule of thumb is to concentrate 80% of your social media outreach on participating in the discussions rather than simply promoting your company. If residents are talking about their experience at your property or with your staff, chime in with constructive commentary and let them know you care. Answer questions that you have expertise in, post content that you feel will be of interest to your audience, and get your subject matter experts involved in the conversation.

It's also important that you build relationships with other social media users. This will give you credibility and extend your reach. For instance, let's say you have 10 twitter followers and you send a tweet that links to an article about leasing. If each of those followers has 10 followers and they each forward your tweet to their group you've just increased your reach to 100. Your followers are more apt to forward (or retweet) your content if you've done the same for them. Participation translates to promotion!

- Share: Engage in social media by sharing your content.** You can enhance your resident loyalty and provide additional value to future tenants by providing them with information about your community through social media outlets such as Facebook. A Facebook page offers both current and future residents access to an online community that not only reflects the character of your properties, but offers valuable information. Your Facebook page is also a great vehicle for sharing your apartment community updates such as: pool opening and hours of operation, trick or

treat hours, parking and snow emergency policies, etc. Local events can also be highlighted on your site such as theatrical productions, holiday gatherings, street festivals and farmers markets.

If you are new to social media, remember to start slow. Don't go out and sign up for a Facebook page, Twitter account, blog site, and a LinkedIn profile all in one day. Although most social media sites are free, the biggest cost is the time it takes to monitor and contribute to them. Pick the most strategic medium for you and start slow. You can ramp up as you gain experience and recognize where you are getting the most return on your efforts.

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Five Easy Steps to Ensure Your Kitchen Cupboards Stay Sparkling Clean

Investing in new kitchen cabinets is a sure-fire way of improving the general look and feel of your kitchen area and simultaneously raising the value of your property (whether it is your home or office space) considerably. Choosing the kitchen cupboards for your home or office is one thing, keeping them in a good condition is quite another. I have put together some tips that will help you to keep your cabinetry as good as new with the minimum of fuss.

1. Clean regularly: Kitchens are a breeding ground for all kinds of nasty moulds and bacteria, and keeping your surface areas and kitchen cabinets clean will go a long way to ensuring a hygienic food preparation area. While surface areas require daily cleaning, kitchen cupboards only need a thorough scrubbing once every two weeks. Keeping up with this schedule will ensure that your cabinets do not become dull and 'gummy', as untended kitchen furniture is prone to do.

2. Match your cleaning product to your surface type: Most modern-day kitchen cupboards are finished with a catalysed conversion varnish. This type of varnish is the easiest to clean and only require the occasional

wipe with a damp cloth. If there is a stain that is particularly hard to get out, you might try a bit of soapy water, but steer clear of any abrasives or waxy products - these will just shorten the lifespan of the surfaces.

Metal inserts and joinery can be cleaned using mild soap and water. Most of the metal parts found on contemporary kitchen cabinets are manufactured with a coating that protects against corrosion and abrasion and cleaning the joinery with harsh chemicals will strip it of this protective layer. Simply give it a thorough wiping with a damp cloth once a week.

3. Raid the pantry: Television- and magazine advertisements will have us all think that we need a variety of costly cleaning products to keep our homes clean. In fact, most of what you need is already in your pantry. Baking soda, for instance, is suitable for removing most common household stains from cabinet surfaces. Use two or three tablespoons of baking soda per cup of warm water and gently remove grease and stubborn splatters with a sponge. Afterwards, rinse down with cold water and dab with a paper towel. Alternatively, use a combination of equal parts vinegar and warm water and get rid of food build-up in no time.

4. A stitch in time saves nine: Keeping your kitchen clean does not need to take long if you keep on top of

things. Here are a few hints that will cut your cleaning time in half:

- Clean spills and liquids immediately.
- Do not leave newspapers and other printed media on cabinet surfaces, the ink can seep into the surface finishing and in time, leave unattractive (and stubborn) marks.
- Instead of sliding objects across surfaces, pick it up and minimize the risk of scratching.

5. Be gentle: It's understandable that you might want to break out a scrubbing brush or steel wool pad at the first sign of a stain, but rather refrain - often, a simple wiping with a damp cloth will have the same effect, while keeping your kitchen cabinets' protective surfaces intact.

And there you have it. Follow these few simple guidelines and keep your kitchen cupboards and other office furniture looking brand new without spending the earth.

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Martin Johnson is an office furniture supplier to a variety of industries and private clients. He specialises in high quality kitchen cabinets.