

## June 2009 SatisFacts ELetter

**SatisFactoid Quick Poll:** How are maintenance service requests most often submitted at your property? [Click Here](#) to respond!

### Resident Relationship Coach's Corner: Maintenance Focus

In May's SatisFactoid Quick Poll, we asked which best described the maintenance team's focus during the busy leasing season.

During the busy Spring season, which best describes your property or portfolio's maintenance focus?	Percent
Resident work orders have a higher priority than make-ready apartments	22.2%
Make-ready apartments have a higher priority than resident work orders	11.1%
Resident work orders and make ready apartments have the same priority	66.7%

Source: SatisFacts Research ([www.satisfacts.com](http://www.satisfacts.com))

As turnover costs increase (more concessions, more vacancy loss days, etc.), the only way to maintain or grow net operating income (NOI) is to hold on to existing residents. And one of the key issues that cause residents to start looking elsewhere is outstanding maintenance issues. If a service request is not completed quickly or done right the first time, the perceived value of the apartment home decreases in the resident's eyes. Therefore, when more attention is placed on make ready apartments, those resident with service requests must wait longer – which causes dissatisfaction – which may cause them to start looking around for better value elsewhere.

The good news is that 22% of respondents indicated resident work orders have a higher priority than make readies and 66% indicated work orders and make readies have the same priority. In order to continue to deliver value, existing residents must be the priority, whether it comes to returning calls and emails or resolving their service requests.

Consider this: instead of throwing monthly resident events that experience minimal participation, put that money toward temporary maintenance help during the heavy turnover season. This allows the maintenance team to maintain focus on work orders and still have a little extra manpower to address the make readies. In the course of two or three months, more residents receive value-adding service delivery than could ever be accomplished in 12 pizza parties.

Source: SatisFacts Research, LLC and Jen Piccotti

*How satisfied are your residents with how quickly you respond to their requests? Find out through a SatisFacts Annual Resident Survey.*

## **Resident Retention Rx: The Unresolved Maintenance Issue**

On average, more than 30% of residents have an unresolved maintenance issue, and they believe it's your fault. They may have reported it once, or maybe not. It could be as minor as a slat in the blinds that is bent, or as major as a leak under the sink that has been dripping for months and is slowly, but devastatingly, causing heavy damage. It doesn't matter if they have ever reported it or not – the fact remains there is an outstanding maintenance issue in your resident's home and it is driving them crazy on a regular basis. What to do?

Ask them. Remind them. At every interaction, pose the question, "Is there anything in your home that needs attention?" If they tell you, great! Enter it in the service request system immediately with all the particulars. And then ask the all important question, "And is there anything else?"

It makes them think, it prompts them to take an additional moment and mentally scan their home. Often they will remember that annoying thing – the thing that never gets taken care of. And then they can tell you. And then it can be resolved! Consider yourself a cold case detective. Always assume there is something in the resident's home that needs attention, and always ask:

"And is there anything else?"

Source: Jen Piccotti

*Find out what impacts your residents' renewal decision through our Insite™ and Insite+™ Move-In, Pre-Renewal and Work Order Follow Up Websurvey Programs.*

## **Team Builder: Becoming Great**

"Keep away from people who belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."

- Mark Twain

Source: Mark Twain

*Ask SatisFacts about the variety of survey and productivity tools that can help you grow your team.*

## **Productivity Pointers: 5 Ways to be Smarter Socially**

The multifamily industry is built upon first impressions and building connections. Nicholas Booth's tips on how to be socially smarter are just as effective with prospects and existing residents as they are with strangers you encounter at a social event.

"Here are 5 ways to be smarter, socially when you walk into a room full of strangers - in 90 seconds or less.

1. Wear great clothes - more people will take you seriously (don't overdo it - don't be better than anyone else)
2. Head for the middle (popular people always go to the middle of the room in restaurants, parties classrooms etc.),
3. Move more slowly than usual. People who move fractionally more slowly than others tend to get noticed and come across as sexy. Get into the habit so it becomes natural: otherwise don't bother.
4. 3-second rule. Notice someone and within three seconds go over and say something. Do this several times.
5. Ask "Talk-show" question. The best way to start a conversation is with a statement followed by an open question. "I hear Seattle's a fantastic place. If I only had 3 hours what should I see?" Remember to give

feedback.”

Source: Nicholas Boothman's Blog, May 24, 2009,  
[http://nicholasboothman.typepad.com/my\\_weblog/2009/05/first-impressions-lasting-relationships.html](http://nicholasboothman.typepad.com/my_weblog/2009/05/first-impressions-lasting-relationships.html)

*How many times have you asked yourself, "Where does my time go?" We can help you find the answer to that question. Ask SatisFacts about a Work-Time Analysis!*

### **SatisFacts - Seen, Heard, and Served**

Visit Booth 1374 at the NAA Tradeshow and say hello to us!

Read our latest article, "A New Lease on Retention," in the June Issue of Units.

Click [HERE](#) to read Doug Miller's Retention and Recession blog on NAA's new 'APTly Spoken' blogsite.

Are you a [MultiFamily Insider](#)? Jen is a featured blogger!

Are you LinkedIn? If you are, or if you're thinking about it, click [HERE](#) to join our new Resident Retention Group on LinkedIn. Learn and share best practices on resident retention.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About It! Jen Piccotti has a new blog - [Resident Retention: Low-Cost/No-Cost Strategies](#).

Do you Twitter? Follow [@SFRJen](#)

### **SatisFacts Resident Relationship Management Services™**

In today's soft markets, it's critical to find ways to "shut the back door." At a cost of \$3,000/move-out, our Resident Relationship Management Services™ (RRM) offer a clear financial benefit by helping clients identify and address the issues impacting unnecessary turnover.

SatisFacts Services That Will Enhance Your Resident Relationships:

- Annual Telephone, Web, and Written Surveys
- Move-In, Maintenance Follow-Up and Pre-Lease Renewal web surveys
- Insite™ Move-In, Maintenance Follow-Up and Pre-Lease Renewal web surveys
- Work-Time Analysis – a productivity study to identify how your teams are spending their time
- Custom Research Studies

Our ever-growing national client list, which includes many NMHC Top 50 and other leading firms like several NAHB Multifamily's Pillars of the Industry Management Companies of the Year, is evidence of the impressive impact our reports can have on the economic performance of your portfolio. What drives the value for our clients is our unique, timely, powerful, affordable and statistically reliable approach to tracking and reporting satisfaction.

SatisFacts has certainly caught the industry's eye, as evidenced by Doug Miller being selected to speak regularly at the Multi-Housing World Conference, NAA Conference/Expo, and many local apartment associations. In addition, Miller is frequently published in leading industry publications such as NAA's Units Magazine. Doug is also an Industry Expert on Multifamily Pro's Marketing Bulletin Board and a facilitator at their annual Brainstorming conference. SatisFacts is a proud member of the National Apartment Association's exclusive National Supplier Council, as well as the National Multi-Housing Council.

## **Client updates**

- California-based client contracts for special study
- Canadian-based client renews contract for Annual Websurveys and Insite for its national portfolio
- Maryland-based client adds new properties to its existing Insite program
- Tennessee-based client renews contract for Insite for its national portfolio
- Texas-based client renews contract for Annual Websurveys for its national portfolio
- Texas-based client contracts for additional Annual Telesurveys for its regional portfolio
- Texas-based client contracts for Annual Written/Web Surveys pilot program for its regional portfolio
- Virginia-based client renews contract for Annual Websurveys for its regional portfolio