

Client Success Q & A

ECI Group is a vertically integrated multifamily firm specializing in management, capital and development of multifamily communities. Learn how ECI Group uses feedback from SatisFacts resident surveys as actionable insights to guide their operation strategies when it comes to new construction as well as analyzing opportunities for capital improvements.



Gray Lane
Director of Marketing Operations

Q: Congratulations on your SatisFacts Resident Satisfaction Award. In your opinion, why is it important for companies to have a customer feedback strategy?

A: I think it's really important to have a customer feedback strategy because we really need to be as in tune with our customers as possible. The only way to do that is by asking them for their opinions and providing a mechanism for their opinions to be disseminated up to us. We use those opinions and customer sentiment as actionable insights to improve our operating services and ultimately provide better customer service, build stronger retention, and make sure that our brand standards and overall business plans are being adhered to.

Q: How does your team utilize SatisFacts Insite Survey feedback to evaluate performance and how has it been useful in decision-making processes for your organization?

A: The feedback that we garner from SatisFacts is disseminated throughout the organization - from the on-site leasing level to the c-suite level. We prioritize transparency in our organization and being able to view, analyze, and have conclusions drawn from all those levels of business is really what allows for a cohesive strategy. We use the data and information gleaned for our new construction pipeline. If we are aware that certain amenities seem to be underutilized or certain amenities are being overutilized, then we can take that back to our development team and say here's what the renters are saying about our product offering. We also use it for development and personal growth initiatives. We often get names and particular instances of a move-in process or other process that may be pain points or cause friction, which allows us to create training opportunities to continuously make those experiences better.

Q: How has the Verified Resident Program helped your communities build a more authentic online reputation?

A: The Verified Resident Program has been instrumental, especially in this state of modern reputation management listings and reviews. We know that there are bad actors and people that may be acting nefariously trying to influence other people's decisions during the leasing process. The Verified Resident Program not only helps to mitigate some of that, but it also allows us to have a true and honest public opinion that is visible to our prospect base online without any concerns about authenticity. At the end of the day, we want people to have a true idea of what it's like to live in our community and what better opportunity to leverage that than someone who is confirmed to live there and verified by our systems. That's the feedback that we obviously would take to heart internally and we would expect our prospect base to feel the same way from a public-facing standpoint.

Q: What process and/or goals do you have in place to ensure thoughtful and timely review response across your review platforms?

A: When it comes to review responses, we are of the opinion that every single review needs to be responded to. Not only because it's the right thing to do from a customer service standpoint, but also to show the level of which we appreciate and value our residents. In this state of modern reputation management online, we know that there's going to be some negative feedback here and there. We're not perfect. While the majority of our residents are incredibly happy and are willing to voice their satisfaction, we know that there may be someone that acted poorly during their lease and may want to try to take it out on us. We have found that prospects nowadays expect some level of balance between good and bad feedback. Obviously, we want the good feedback to be more prevalent and pronounced, but what we do about the bad feedback is show that it has been taken internally, presented to the broader group, and ultimately identified as a point of emphasis for how we can improve our services and products and ultimately mitigate that feedback in the future. I think one thing that's really valuable is that for prospects that may be reviewing feedback from several communities, it's showing that by responding to every review with a true, robust, and thoughtful response as opposed to a canned response, the management's willingness to accommodate and overcome obstacles that may have been presented previously, and also shows that they care and value their residents and that's a pillar of our business.

Q: What has been the effect of the eplQ Index on your business and how does your company use it to measure and evaluate the performance of your online reputation?

A: The eplQ Index is fantastic for providing a snapshot view incorporating a variety of metrics into one aggregated score. It makes it really easy for all corners of our business and all personnel to understand the overall health of our reputation. Additionally, the eplQ scores are widely publicized and there's a lot of PR and press opportunities based upon those rankings that are something we look to highlight. It's something that we find great value in. It's also great to highlight our teams. We have teams that do a fantastic job and while we know they do, it's great to see that reflected with general customer sentiment and to see those great goals celebrated when we achieve them.

Q: How has the ApartmentRatings and SatisFacts Education team helped your company to achieve your resident satisfaction and online reputation goals?

A: We have really been nurtured and built a strong relationship with the education team. They are fantastic about providing our team, both at the corporate and the on-site levels, with resources; from comparing benchmarks throughout the industry to making sure that we're making the most out of the technology available to us. They've been a hands-on, white-glove support system, and something that we value very much.

Q: What is one eye opening thing you've learned about your residents using the SatisFacts surveys?

A: We have learned that renters' preferences change very frequently and there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution for offering product in a certain submarket. While certain amenities may sound fantastic throughout the development process for the four, five, six year long period of conceiving to actually having that product delivered, quite a bit can change. Something that may have been massively important to our renter base five years ago may be less important now. By utilizing the feedback from our residents in terms of what features and services they've come to expect, it allows us to tailor our approach a little bit better and allows us to be more agile and proficient when we are going through the development process.