

Rekindling Your Leasing Fire During the Winter Months!

“Warming Up Your Sales Habits”

Fall is such an awesome time of year that brings exciting changes not only the beautiful foliage of the season, but to our industry as a whole. From the fast-paced summer leasing to the “move in quick before school starts” frenzy, the atmosphere beings to slow down with great resident retention events for the holidays.

Chili cookoffs and pumpkin carving contests coupled with all kinds of delicious sweets with lots of hot chocolate and apple cider are common at our community parties. Gatherings for Thanksgiving with loads of wonderful displays of food and ending the year with holiday parties and gift exchanges makes these times of year so very special.

But now, the parties are all over, the excitement of the holidays draws to a close and the beginning of the slowest time of leasing starts...the “after the holidays, winter season”.

Keeping that positive, energetic momentum going after the holidays seems to be the most difficult time for our leasing consultants. Dark dreary days and less activity of the telephones ringing or prospects coming in can really damage your “closing” attitude. We often struggle with being too tired or irritable about just to coming to work!

We know that when it comes to buying something, people don’t like “grouchy, uncaring, or lack luster” salespeople. So, here are some great ways to avoid those winter “dull drums” and maintain that positive spirit of good sales skills.

1. You Are Bored!: Cleaning, reorganizing, and moving your desk to another area can sometimes do the trick. Even if you can’t move the furniture “much”, change the angle of the desk and or swap out chairs. A coat of fresh paint, an area rug, or some new desk items can not only make you feel better, but your residents and prospects will notice a difference too. Change up your work area feel the difference!
2. Lighten Up!: Adding a few table lamps on your leasing desks can make a huge difference in the atmosphere of your office. Light brings a feeling of warmth and coziness that fills the room and will help keep you “mentally alert” too. Of course natural light is always best, but if you don’t have windows to let in the sunlight to your office then for those really dark days, you can even add a “Virtual Sunshine” light to give you the benefits you get from natural sunlight. It is scientifically proven to make you feel better.
3. Get Outside! Take periodic breaks from your paperwork to “walk the property” and get some fresh air and clear your mind. Take photos while you walk so you may put on your computer to show prospects of features you may not be able to show on occasion, such as a specific floor plan, view from a certain floor level, amenity or certainly something “new”. Getting to know your property better helps you to create those all important “mental pictures” for your prospect.

4. Let it Rain!: Especially in the south, we don't get as much snow and ice, but we do get rain and it always seems that this is when people come to look at our apartments. So make the best of it and on rainy days (NOT thunderstorms of course), bring some cute boots, a light raincoat if necessary, to be ready for the prospect. Buy several "whimsical, fun shaped" umbrellas to use during your tour. Put the umbrellas in an unusually shaped umbrella stand by the front door as "conversation starters". How about using an umbrella with lights on those cloudy days! How is that for being "memorable"?
5. Fresh Flowers! Go to your local florist or even your grocery store that sells fresh cut flowers. Offer to make a "trade" by promoting their company in exchange for having their "not so fresh" flowers they may need to get rid of and have them delivered to your office daily. Flowers are another way to keep the environment fresh plus, you can use them as give aways to each prospect who comes in that day! Who doesn't like an unexpected gift like a fresh flower just for visiting your community?
6. Change Your Thoughts: Learning to think less negatively will help improve your mood. If you notice yourself feeling less peppy or enthusiastic during the winter, you can accept that feeling as a normal response to the dark and cold of winter without getting down on yourself about it. You can also respond to negative thoughts like *"I hate winter,"* and *"I can't deal with this,"* or *"winter is never going to end"* with *"I know what to do to feel better"* and *"winter is a challenge and I become stronger by meeting the challenge."*
7. Role Play: Take time to role play with your peers. Call each other up and "practice" your telephone techniques. Visit each other's communities and listen to how they demonstrate their apartments and how they overcome your objections. If that isn't possible, definitely take time to shop other communities in the area, even if they aren't on your particular market survey list. Listening to others can spark your own ideas of how to improve your leasing skills and maybe even "steal" some to use in your own presentation.
8. Reach Out. Your connections with your "favorite" residents will help to recharge your belief in why your community is such a great place to call home. Ask if you may visit their apartment and see how they have decorated and find out why they have lived there so long. It is amazing what a "touch of reality" of someone who really does love living at your community has on your own personal closing skills. Sometimes it is good to be "sold" on your own community by someone you know and who actually does live there.

The winter months are always more difficult but remember that your prospects and residents still need your happy, smiling faces when they walk in the door. The impact of that first "30 seconds" of your greeting makes all the difference to them. Believe me, the prospect is looking for that friendly face, offering some hot chocolate or cider, and helping them find that perfect place to live.

Remember if you are happy and excited to see them, they will be happy and excited to lease and stay at your community!

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