



SETTING THE FOUNDATION OF TRUST IN AMENITY OFFERINGS

by Teresa Glauser

Though the world as we know it has changed drastically over the past few weeks, there is no better time than now to “show up” for your residents. In this time of uncertainty, people need community now more than ever. If you are looking to expand and build trust within your community, this is a chance to differentiate the rental experience at your properties, as well as an opportunity to broaden your amenity offerings to more than activities within their physical space.

In a recent National Apartment Association (NAA) micro webinar titled “Amenity Awareness,” Paul Rhodes from the NAA Education Institute suggests creating “fitness paths” around your property for residents to get outside and stay active during times of social distancing. He mentions a structure as simple as a different movement at each building on your campus such as “7 push-ups at building 7, 10 lunges at building 10” and so on. However, there are no limits as to how creative you can get. If you want to offer indoor alternatives or extras, you can give residents some tips on common household items to use during workouts (laundry detergent, full water bottles, etc.). Your events and office staff can organize the guidelines for the “paths” and distribute to your residents via social media and email.



Built out into challenges, the fitness activities you promote could start some friendly virtual competition right within your grounds and can be incentivized with food gift cards, pet supplies (if applicable) and more. If you are looking for ways to help residents track their activities, I encourage you to investigate resources available from your fitness equipment vendors. Most fitness professionals are adapting their services to be an over-arching partner for their customers while equipment isn't accessible. Use of a workout tracking app or a simple screenshot of progress tracked elsewhere uploaded to a social media group can give your residents motivation, an outlet to celebrate successes and gives you a free, virtual amenity.



The unprecedented circumstances we are facing create visibility of your leadership initiatives as a manager/owner, providing an opportune chance to improve your perception of involvement on your properties. Communicating with residents is important during uncertain times, especially since it affects their living space. They are looking to you now to have a voice in the current climate. Humanize your role with your residents and reassure them that your staff is here for them. This could mean sharing

updates through a social media page and/or group or reaching other residents through email. Offer full transparency in your communications surrounding the crisis and how you plan to keep them safe.

Eventually, your amenity spaces will reopen. Just as there will be a more health-conscious approach to the cleanliness of public spaces, your initiatives for cleaning and disinfecting in your communal spaces will be more important, and telling, than ever. Residents will rely on you to amp up your supply of cleaning products: hand sanitizers, soaps, wipes, etc. In the case of your fitness center, your equipment may react differently to cleaning solutions used elsewhere. To avoid risking your warranty coverage, be conscious of the guidance from your equipment manufacturer and their recommended procedures for cleaning and disinfecting. Following their instructions ensures that your maintenance is in consideration of maximizing product life.

While this is an extremely challenging situation on many fronts, it opens lines of communication with residents to both extend support and leverage your offerings. Housing professionals who view it as an opportunity to lay the foundation of trust with residents will build loyalty that keeps them around for the long run.

TERESA R. GLAUSER

A fitness industry veteran with over 25 years of experience, Teresa is the Strategic National Account Manager for Matrix specializing in multi-family housing. Teresa spent the first 15 years of her career managing health clubs and running her own personal training business called "Take Action." She fell in love with walking beside people as they transformed their lives, and now loves locking arms with her customers to craft a fitness space that helps to transform their business and their residents' lives.