

Now Leasing! Why Aren't You?

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If I ever need to brainstorm on ideas for my next marketing plan, I go shop my competition. I leave my business suit at

home, put my gym clothes on, and here I go. It's surprising at times how different you are treated when you change your clothes to the more relaxing attire. To all the leasing agents out there, I say to you: Don't judge a book by its cover; read it instead, as you may be surprised at what you find out. I usually end up with a nice list of what not to do. Have you ever shopped your competition at 5:55 pm on a Friday? You could probably pop in looking for an apartment about five minutes before closing on any day, and easily evaluate the property's commitment to customer service.

A friend of mine recently relocated from the Northwest. One of the first things she did when she got to Dallas was apartment shopping. She called to ask one day if there was a law or a rule in Texas about not showing an apartment when it rains. Three out of four leasing agents she visited with told her they could not show her an apartment because it was raining. I am still trying to figure out why rain was such a problem because I know this will never happen under my watch.

The most common things I encounter when I shop my competition are lack of interest in my needs and lack of urgency. Once in a while, I will meet a leasing agent that is so enthusiastic about their

community, I almost wish I could lease from them. You have probably heard this before: "people rent from people they like." I agree completely. Do you ever spend an extra dollar for an item or drive an extra mile to the store that gives you excellent customer service every time? I do.

Whether you are in the residential, commercial or retail business, remembering the following tips can bring you more and happy customers.

- 1. BE PROFESSIONAL.** Dress professionally. Shake your prospect's hand. Smile. Make eye contact. Listen. Make sure to talk in a professional manner.
- 2. BELIEVE IN YOUR PRODUCT.** If you don't believe in your product, why do you expect anyone else to? Take pride in what you do; act as if you are the owner and know your product so well that you can answer any questions. Know all of its benefits and figure out ways to overcome any objections. If you convince yourself you have the best out there, then you can convince anyone else also.

3. DON'T GIVE OUT PRICE RIGHT AWAY.

How many times does someone call or walk in the door only to immediately ask what pricing is? It's easy to just answer the question, right? I know you don't want to be rude and appear to be ignoring their question, but as hard as it might be, just hold off! When you are leasing, it is important that you understand what exactly the prospect is looking for. At the same time, you want the prospect to understand exactly what

they are getting for that particular price. So if you answer right away, you aren't doing either of these things. Sell your product first, paint a picture of what you are offering, and describe its features and benefits before giving out the price.

4. UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMER'S

NEEDS. It is important to understand what they are looking for. Their time is as precious as yours and assuming or trying to guess or even recommending what you think is important to them is taking a big risk. Ask why are they making a change? What is it they didn't like about the previous place? Are they moving from within the area or is this a big change for them? What's important to them in the new place? The questions can go on and on and help provide solutions that specifically fit their needs.

5. ASK FOR THEIR BUSINESS. Did you know that 80% of the prospects are lost because the sales person did not ask for the sale? Too many leasing agents feel uncomfortable with this process, but ultimately, you have to believe in your own work. Do you provide great service and a wonderful experience? Then feel confident about asking for the lease!

Remember Walt Disney's words: "Do what you do so well that they will want to see it again and bring their friends." Happy Leasing!

Roxana Hammock, CPM® is a Certified Leasing and Marketing Trainer by the Certified Leasing And Sales Specialists.