

Expert Advice: Social Media Secrets for Property Management Professionals

Including expert advice from Charity Zierten, Social Media Consultant at Socially Engaged Marketing, Darnell Holloway, Head of Yelp's Business Outreach, and Aimee Miller, VP of Marketing at AppFolio.

We've compiled this ebook with ideas and advice from experts on how social media can benefit your property management business. These experts reveal some of their best tips on how to maximize Yelp, Facebook and Pinterest. In this collection you'll find practical, actionable, and trustworthy advice from experts—you'll take away brilliant bits of wisdom that you'll be able to immediately apply to your business.

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It's all about Yelp(ing)!

Darnell Holloway, Head of Yelp's Business Outreach

Yelp has become the top destination for consumers to go when needing to find a great local business -- property managers being on Yelp is a must! We've asked Darnell Holloway, Head of Yelp's Business Outreach

Team a few questions to provide you with a few facts and tidbits related to how consumers, now more than ever, are relying on online reviews and how businesses can leverage online reviews to achieve a strong online presence.

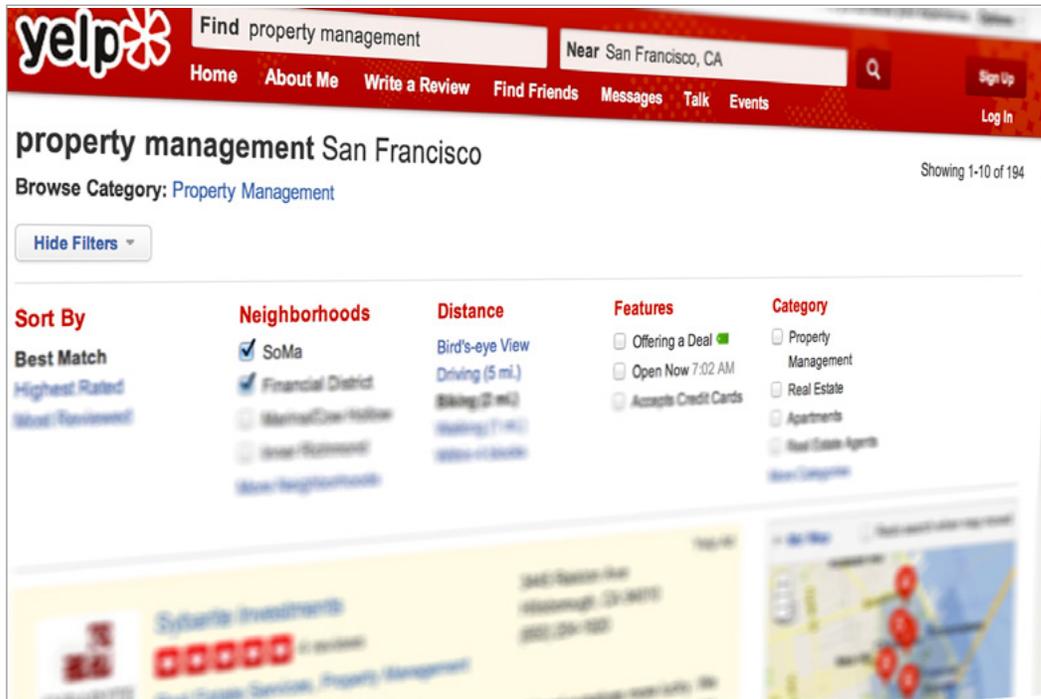
The top 3 ways a property management company can leverage Yelp

1. Make it personal. Add content to your business page. Yelp offers business owners a free suite of tools at biz.yelp.com that allow them to, among other things, add content to their business listing in order to customize it, including adding photos. We found that posting pictures on your business page may result in Yelp users spending 2.5X more time on your listing. Also take advantage of the "About This Business" section to paint a clear picture of who you are, what you specialize in and why consumers should choose you. The more detail, the better.

2. It's all about great customer service and letting reviews build organically. Although it may seem simple, our best recommendation for property managers is to continue providing a great experience for tenants and owners. Our research shows that when a Yelp user mentions "good customer service" in a review, that review is over 5X as likely to be a five star review versus a one star review. It's also important to let reviews build organically. Rather than asking for reviews, let consumers know you have a presence on Yelp and allow them to connect the dots on their own.



3. Use review content as market research. Do a search on Yelp for property managers in your city, or any major metro for that matter, and sort by highest rated. Read through the reviews to get a sense of what these property managers are doing well. Use this information about your peers to determine whether or not there are areas that you can possibly improve on.



What is considered an effective Yelp.com marketing campaign?

The most effective marketing campaigns tend to incorporate as many of Yelp's free and paid features as possible. For example, property managers who do everything on the list below will be much better positioned than competitors who are doing nothing:

Yelp Free services:

- › Fully build out free listing with great photos and lots of personalized information about their business



- › Consistently use Yelp’s free review response tools to address both positive and negative reviews
- › Post a check-in offer to target mobile Yelp users (only applicable if the PM has a physical office)

Yelp Paid services:

- › Buy search ads to drive additional traffic to their business page
- › Buy an enhanced profile listing which includes a video of the business and/or a photo slideshow to help conversion rates

70% of respondents trust consumer opinions posted online according to a recent Nielsen study on global trust in advertising.

—Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages, April 2012

What is the best way to respond to Yelp reviews?

While 80% of the reviews on Yelp are three stars or higher, every business out there will likely receive negative feedback at some point because it’s impossible to please 100% of the people you deal with 100% of the time.

That being said, don’t lose your cool when it happens to you. Instead, take some time to think about what customer service policies you have in place in the offline world and apply that same logic when dealing with online reviewers. To be specific, consider implementing constructive feedback when appropriate and get in the habit of addressing the concerns of critical reviewers (diplomatically of course) using the private message or public comment feature at biz.yelp.com.



How do you know this approach is effective for business owners?

We went straight to the source. Over the past year we held numerous town hall meetings with business owners and members of the Yelp Elite squad (some of our most prolific reviewers) to learn what resonates with consumers. Yelp users consistently mentioned that they appreciate getting a response from business owners after leaving reviews, whether positive or negative. We also continue to see examples of how a well thought out response to a negative review has the potential to result in a bump in star rating

Measuring ROI

The Yelp Metrics dashboard found at biz.yelp.com is the best way to get a sense of overall ROI. This free feature gives property managers the ability to track traffic to their page from both desktop and mobile consumers. In addition to **User Views**, we also track **User Actions** which includes mobile calls, website clicks, bookmarks, mobile check-ins, and GPS directions mapped to your business. These **User Actions** should be thought of as potential customer leads and can give you a sense of the overall impact your Yelp presence is having on your business.

Interested in learning more?

- › **Check out this webinar:** [Property Management Deep Dive Into Yelp.com Reviews](#)





To Tweet or Not?

Charity Zierten, Social Media Consultant at Socially Engaged Marketing

Should you be using Twitter for your Property Management Business?

Yes! Twitter has been called a micro-blog but think of it more like a bulletin board for the world. Everything from natural disasters to in-depth discussions takes place on this public forum. Brands and Businesses are using Twitter to communicate with prospects and customers, both to provide timely customer service and to increase revenue.



Pin It To Win It

Charity Zierten, Social Media Consultant at Socially Engaged Marketing

When Pinterest rolled out, many people just thought this was another social media fad. But it turns out that everything “visual” is the newest and hottest social media platform out there. Property Managers can leverage the power of Pinterest to help gain exposure to their business and help fill vacancies faster. We asked social media expert Charity Zierten,

from *Socially Engaged Marketing* to share her perspective on how property managers can leverage Pinterest to reach new audiences, increase visits to their website, and generate new leads.

Did you know that Pinterest has **20 million active users and is the 4th largest driver of referral traffic worldwide** (beating Yahoo, Bing and Twitter!) -- which means if your property management business isn't Pinning yet, you should be!

What is Pinterest?

Pinterest is a pinboard-style photo-sharing website that allows users to create and manage theme-based image collections such as events, interests, and hobbies. Users can browse other pinboards for images, "re-pin" images to their own pinboards, or "like" photos.

What are hashtags all about?

A hashtag (#) is a commonly-used way to highlight a topic or a phrase. For example, if I am pinning something about fashion, I may put in the description, "This is the best #fashion tip for a quick #hairstyle!" Hashtags are used on many social networking sites to make searching for a particular topic of interest easier. When you click on a hashtag, you are immediately taken to search results.

How could a person find our apartment community on Pinterest?

By using tags and sharing interesting content, people will naturally find your pins and will help

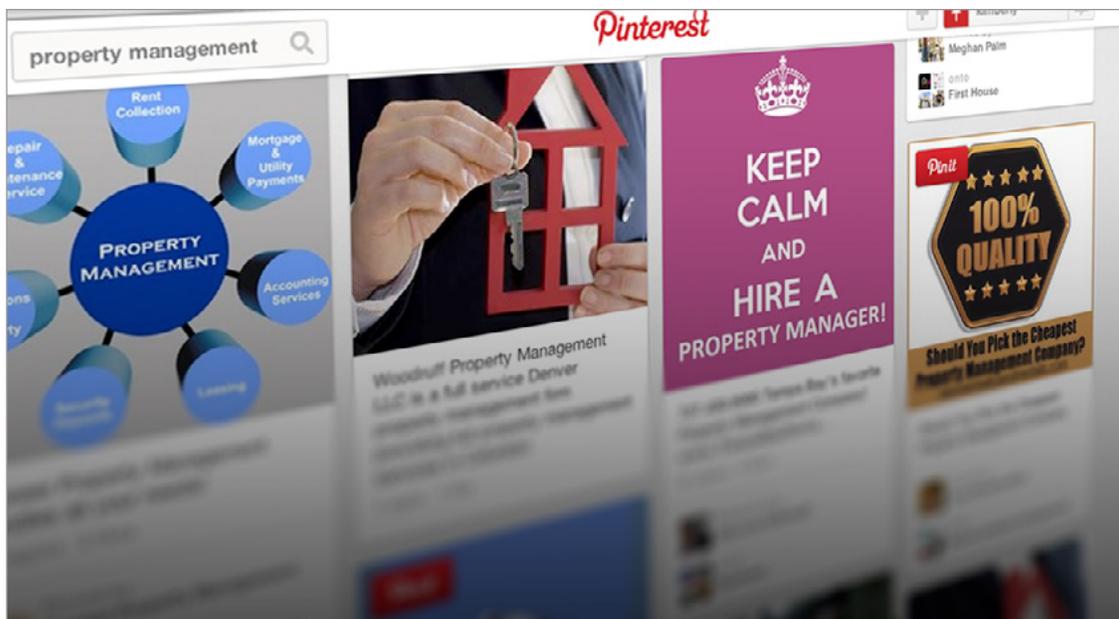
Using a call to action within the pin description increases engagement 80%.



you gain exposure. It is a great idea to utilize your current social networking and email marketing campaigns to promote your new Pinterest page. When residents and prospects enter your office, be sure to let them know you have a Pinterest page and invite them to share pins and follow your page!

Is my competition using Pinterest?

The search feature is pretty easy to use. In the upper left hand corner of Pinterest, enter the community name or keywords the community could be using. Try the property management group name. Perhaps the community is only a board on a Pinterest page. If that doesn't bring anything up, you can always search by the community name + Pinterest in Google.



How do we know if our customers use Pinterest?

The only way to know is to ask! You can do this when they visit your leasing office, create a survey they complete, or you can search for keywords about your community and local area to determine if there are current users you can connect with.



What is the best way to gain Pinterest followers?

The best way is to share interesting content, and then comment, like, and repin other people's interesting content. Reciprocity lives and breathes online!

Be professional. Be relevant. Focus on great products, fun communities, and inspiring ideas.

How often should I pin content?

Pinterest pins have a half-life of about a week, compared to Facebook's 80 minutes. Start with 10-12 boards and schedule seven regular posts using Pingraphy.com. Saturday mornings and weekday evenings are the best times to pin for

maximum exposure. Test that for a couple of weeks and increase or decrease your activity based on the response-level you receive.

Interested in learning more?

- › **Pinterest offers:** [Resources for business page owners](#)
- › **Check out this webinar:** ['Pinterest for Property Managers.'](#) It covers everything you need to know about Pinterest—how your community can use a Pinterest Board, the types of boards and images that get the most views, and Pinterest etiquette best practices.

Best time to PIN:

Daytime: 2PM–4PM EST

Evening: 8PM–1 AM EST





Should You Be Using Google+ ?

Aimee Miller, VP Marketing at [AppFolio](#)

Yes, it's Google! Google dominates the search engine market, so it is important for property managers to take advantage of every listing opportunity with Google that is available. Google+ Local is linked to Google+ business pages, and is a replacement for what was formerly known as Google Places.

To setup Google+ Local, simply find “[Google Places for Business](#)”, activate the account and fill out all of the necessary information.



Expert Advice on Facebook

Charity Zierten, Social Media Consultant at [Socially Engaged Marketing](#)

With more than one billion users, Facebook is a powerful platform for marketing initiatives as a property manager—but, it's important to know how to **reach the right audience** for your business, and then turn these visitors into customers.



When you have a strong presence on Facebook, your business is part of the conversation and you have access to the most powerful kind of ‘word-of-mouth’ marketing—recommendations by friends. We’ve asked Charity to share some of her insights on how property managers can utilize Facebook and Facebook Advertising to their benefit.

How can a property management company best leverage Facebook?

1. Resident Retention: Use Facebook to communicate with residents. Bring value to their everyday experience online!

2. Prospecting: Facebook is the king of ‘word-of-mouth’ marketing! By using the tagging features and promoted posts, a company can target friends-of-fans and potential future residents easily and efficiently.

3. Advertising: Reaching new prospects is made possible by Facebook’s Promoted Posts and Sponsored Stories. People are less likely to ignore content within their news feeds, so skip the expensive sidebar ad options.

“67% of B2C companies and 41% of B2B companies have acquired a customer from Facebook.”

—HubSpot

What are the best ways for a property management firm to improve its Facebook EdgeRank?

The number one way to improve EdgeRank is to get more comments! Ask questions! (Fill-in-the-blank work the best.) Of course, you’ll have to promote the post or sponsor a story to gain any attraction in newsfeeds these days.

Another way is to tag commenters with replies once they do comment on posts. Keep the conversation going. **Comments, comments, comments!**



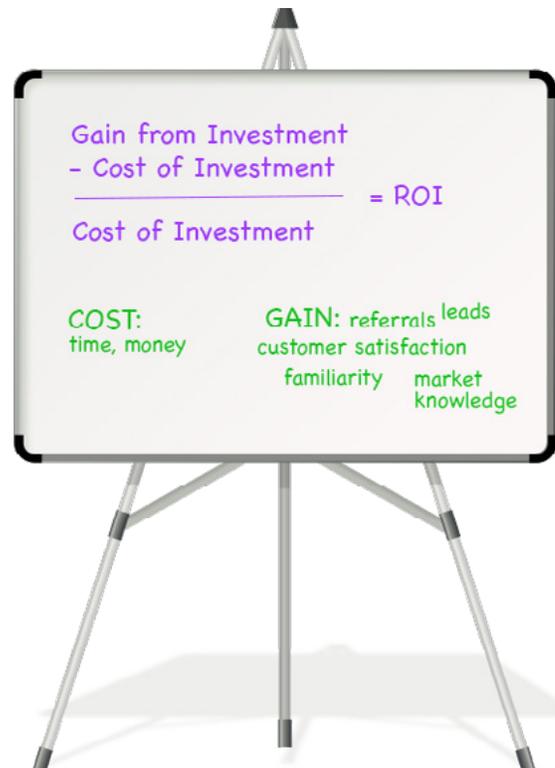
When should companies pay Facebook to maximize reach in promoting individual posts?

I would promote a few posts per month to expand your reach. The posts should ask a question or inspire sharing to be most effective.

How should a property management firm measure Facebook ROI?

ROI will depend on the goals of using Facebook. For each company, they may be a little (or a whole lot) different! The truth is that once a property management group has found their magic ROI calculator, they aren't going to share it with their competition. It is essential to find your own calculation and improve as needed.

Remember, don't measure your number of Facebook "likes." Each page will measure the value of a fan differently, based on numerous factors like EdgeRank. Start by determining your goals. What are you spending (in time and dollars) to achieve your goal? Once you calculate what you're spending, determine the value of your goal. These are essential to the ROI formula: ROI = Gain from Investment – Cost of Investment (including time and money) divided by the Cost of Investment (including time and money).



Interested in learning more?

- › **Check out this webinar:** [Cutting-Edge Facebook Strategies for Property Managers](#)



Conclusion

Having your property management business active in social media and being present online is a growing trend...and it's a must in today's business world. Take some of these best practices that these industry experts suggest and use them to your advantage. Be smart about communicating to your residents and prospects on social communities. And remember that happy residents will speak the word about your community online and offline.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Darnell Holloway is the Manager of Local Business Outreach for Yelp.com. He meets with local business owners across the country to educate them on the value of engaging with their Yelp listings, and joining the conversation happening about their businesses.

Social media consultant **Charity Zierten** from Socially Engaged Marketing, is regarded as a leading industry expert on utilizing social media strategies for the multifamily housing industry. Charity shares unique and innovative perspectives on the use of various social networking channels to reach residents and prospects during national and regional apartment industry events.

Aimee Miller is the Vice President of Marketing at AppFolio Property Manager. She is responsible for all marketing functions for AppFolio. AppFolio is focused on delivering workflow solutions to vertical industries and the first target market is Property Management.

ABOUT APPFOLIO

AppFolio provides complete web-based property management software design for the modern property manager. Learn more about AppFolio at www.AppFolio.com

OTHER RESOURCES

- › [Guide to the Cloud for Property Managers](#)
- › [Keys to a Successful Website: A Checklist for Property Managers](#)

