

**5 OUT OF
THE BOX
WAYS TO REACH
RENTERS**

Finding potential renters is the most important marketing step to filling vacancies and keeping your property management business not just afloat but charging full speed ahead. But how do you reach those thousands of potential renters when they are being inundated daily (if not hourly) with emails and phone calls and TV advertisements?

There are many traditional ways to grab the attention of potential customers, but those methods are changing as society evolves and technology becomes more ingrained in people's lives.

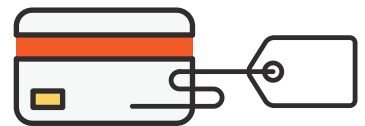
So what can you do? You need to think outside the box and do something that's different from the norm. Here are five out-of-the-box ways to reach more renters.

START A RESIDENT REFERRAL PROGRAM

There is no better advocate for your business than a happy customer. If you're doing things right, you might have hundreds of them living in your properties. Why not use them for your advantage?

It's highly likely that at some point, a current resident may know other people who are in the market for a new apartment. By giving those current renters perks for referrals that turn into new residents, you'll provide renters with an incentive to help you keep your vacancies low. Perks for resident referrals can be things like:

- A percentage or dollar amount off of their rent
- A gift card from a popular local store
- Use of a facility or area that would normally cost extra
- Cash or a prepaid visa or mastercard



Before you create any referral programs, make sure you take into account the cost to your business and put your official plan in writing. By fostering a positive experience, asking people to share their experiences with others, and rewarding them for helping you market your vacancies, you're reaching more potential renters with minimal effort.

CREATE ENGAGING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Social media is pervasive today, so to get attention and reach more renters you'll need to be pretty creative. Your social media campaigns need to be unique, realistic, and actionable. Give people a reason to interact with you, and make them want to engage in a discussion or dialogue. You can ask renters:

- **What amenities they prefer or recommendations on things to do in the local community**
- **What they look for in a property**
- **What they're missing from their management company**
- **What changes they would make to the rental experience**



On Twitter, have people answer with a special hashtag, and offer something to the first person who responds. On Instagram, perhaps run a photo contest with people posting their favorite property photos. It's important to first know where your renters are on social (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest?) to know where to focus your efforts.

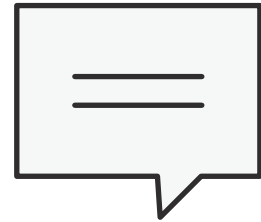
The more people feel heard, the more likely they will be to remember you and consider choosing your properties for their next home. You don't have to try to be the next Apple or Google on social media, but it is important that you don't just post the same things your competitors are posting. See what others in your industry are doing on social but remember to keep your own unique voice and brand.

LISTEN AND JOIN THE CONVERSATIONS



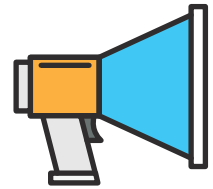
You can certainly start your own discussions on Facebook community pages, but don't forget about the conversations others are having elsewhere. People on rental websites and other social platforms talk about companies, properties, and experiences. If you pay close attention to those conversations, you can learn what renters like and don't like about you, your properties, and your competitors. Where appropriate, you may want to join in and clear up misconceptions, questions, or concerns. Just be careful, and make sure you:

- Don't come off as overly defensive
- Stay open to honest complaints and criticism
- Don't promise changes you won't or can't make
- Don't keep talking if you're not welcomed
- Avoid bashing your competition, because it's unprofessional



By getting involved in the online conversations of renters, you may be able to shed light on the rental and property management process that will help renters and potential renters understand that process better. They can appreciate your candor, which could lead them to come to you when they're ready to move from their current location or they need a rental home.

EMBRACE CONTENT MARKETING



Don't worry, it's not as scary as it sounds. Property managers have so much to do each day, the last thing on your mind is creating content. But, if your current renters don't know what's going on and potential renters can't find much information about you, you're losing out on valuable interactions and an opportunity to connect with more people. Among the ways to get your message out and encourage responses to more in-depth topics is to start a property management blog. While not completely out of the box, since blogs have been around for twenty years now, the channel isn't as prevalent among property management companies.

To keep renters engaged with your blog:

- **Post at least once each week, if possible**
- **Write about topics that invite questions and responses**
- **Don't get too controversial**
- **Ask renters what topics they would like to see covered**
- **Invite renters to contribute to the blog**



Having an opportunity to interact with your renters and potential renters in a meaningful way can really help you discover what renters need. That can make you be more proactive in giving them a good rental experience, which won't go unnoticed. A blog is also a great way to improve your search engine optimization, with more up-to-date and informative content out there associated with your company. Just be sure your blog is something you can really commit to, so it doesn't just languish and sit abandoned.

In addition to blogging, there are many other ways to provide content to your rental community. You want that content to have value, and provide knowledge and insight to the people who read it. Whether you're targeting your current renters, potential renters, or both, your website can be an excellent source for valuable information. Make sure your site provides:

- **Information on the rent payment methods you accept**
- **The specific date when rent is due**
- **How to put in a maintenance request**
- **What to do in an emergency**
- **What your rental properties provide**
- **The amenities you have**
- **An easy way to contact you with questions**
- **Information about rental laws, rights, and responsibilities**

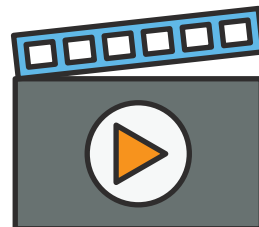
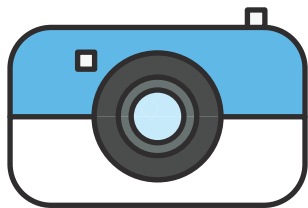
If you want to reach more renters, you have to be proactive and provide unique information and experiences. Doing those things can bring you closer to the renters you already have, and can also bring in more renters to fill any vacancies in your properties.

LEVERAGE VIDEO

Video is everywhere: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat. There's a rise in live streaming with apps like Periscope and Meerkat. According to Hubspot, 78% of people watch videos online every week, and 55% watch videos every day! There are many more stats proving that video is continuing to dominate marketing, so property managers should jump on this rising wave. But how can a property management company take advantage of video? Here are some ideas to get you started:



- Film 1-minute video walk-throughs of your properties that prospects can view on your website.
- Create a video compilation of resident testimonials; ask them why they love living in your properties.
- Create a series of quick thirty-second to one-minute videos for your YouTube channel that explain what to do in emergency situations, and share tips for preventing common maintenance issues. You could even ask a local firehouse to provide you with safety tips for renters that you can share around the holidays.
- Film any community events you organize to show fun and togetherness in your properties.



Video is here to stay, and it doesn't have to be time-consuming or expensive. Social apps are built around the concept of "quick" and "easy" and marketers love them for that reason; property managers can take advantage of this in their marketing, as well.

Learn more at www.AppFolio.com