

Moving Marketing Online: Interview with Nick Scarabosio, Jackson Group Property Management

by Aimee Miller

I recently had the chance to speak with Nick Scarabosio from Jackson Group Property Management in San Francisco, CA. San Francisco is a competitive market and you have to be thinking of creative ways to reach your audience...and Nick is pretty creative!



Aimee: How has your property management marketing changed over the past couple of years?

Nick: Our marketing has changed quite a bit over the last few years – especially how much more we can do, for less. We used to be heavily focused on print advertising and mail, both are very expensive. But now we’re more focused on using online marketing to reach our customers. And this definitely saves us money.

Aimee: It sounds like you’re spending your marketing budget differently, what are you doing?

Nick: Yes we are. We have reduced the advertising budget because we are exploring different avenues. We’re spending on targeted Google Adwords as well as testing some Facebook advertising. We basically only do print ads in the Yellow Pages – the majority of our advertising is now on the Internet.

Aimee: You’re in San Francisco so I’d assume the people are pretty tech-savvy – do you think your approach works in all markets or just those like San Francisco?

Nick: I think it works especially well in markets like San Francisco but the ideas apply for everyone because our culture has changed in the last 10 years due to the tech boom. I know grandparents who are getting on the Internet now to talk to grandchildren and they realize it is an easy way to do business from greater distances. Phone books are getting out of date – you can use the Internet to look up and find a property manager in New York even if you’re in Los Angeles.

Aimee: How did you get started using the Internet for marketing?

Nick: It has definitely been trial and error because I really like to figure it out on my own. I started working by putting together the Google ads together myself. You really need to start with the simplest form you can find – I think you have to be hands-on to be sure your ideas really come through.

Aimee: What are your most effective Internet channels right now?

Nick: Craigslist right now is the #1 resource. In San Francisco 95% of rentals are filled via Craigslist postings. Second is social networking like Twitter, Facebook, MySpace – it is not always what you know it is who you know! So we use it for finding residents as well as business networking, owners, potential clients, vendors. We’re building our Facebook community and we use word of mouth extensively. If I know I have 25 friends in San Francisco who are in the business in my social networking group I’ll ask for a referral for a painter or plumber. It is natural to look for personal referrals so we always make sure to provide great service so our network will feel good referring us.

Aimee: Do you still find time to engage with the local community?

Nick: First you have to have a good foundation, meaning a good market presence and solid company. You always have to be involved with the community. An example is we do simple flyers to neighbors when we take over a property saying something like “Jackson Group is proud to have rented 120 A Street, please join us on Facebook where we share local offers and specials.” It is important to have a good mixture because it is hard to get people to just find you on the Internet. Find opportunities to connect with neighbors to get people to join you online, then you really have your presence set.

To read the complete article go to www.PropertyManager.com

10 Tips for Property Managers Using Facebook

by Charity Hisle

Facebook is opening doors for property managers to engage in conversation with residents and their local community. The question everyone wants to know is, how? It's easier than you might think! Here are 10 tips for apartment communities using Facebook.



1. Create a Fan Page.

Although it is tempting to create a profile, it is risky. Facebook dictates that businesses are required to use Fan pages and can remove any profile page for violation of terms and conditions. I recommend not taking the chance.

2. Suggest your Facebook friends fan the page.

Fan your own page with your own profile. Click the suggest to friends link beneath your Fan page avatar and share the page with your friends and family.

3. Share relevant information.

Ideas for updates include community events, local events, links to the community newsletter, photos, videos and local school information. I also like holiday recipes, easy how-to's, and apartment-living articles. Write or share what your residents and prospects want to read.

4. Connect with local business Fan Pages.

Reach out to local businesses in your area and "fan" their Facebook Fan pages. Comment and link back to your property Fan page. If your business neighbor is on Facebook, connect with them on Facebook.

5. Make it easy to Fan your page.

Post links to fan your page on your property website.

6. Reverse that!

If you want to drive traffic to your website, don't forget to provide a link to your website on your Fan page.

7. Tell everyone!

Tell residents, walk-ins, and everyone you know! You can use signs, posters, flyers and even buttons. Make it an everyday conversation in your leasing office.

8. Create unique promotions.

Create unique promotions that encourage ongoing participation and loyalty. Monetary promotions inspire short-lived activity.

9. Encourage feedback.

Use polls to request feedback from your 'online' community on future content. Respond to every comment, even negative ones. By addressing issues head-on and honestly, you will establish an expectation of trust between yourself and your community.

10. Get your staff involved!

Facebook is an opportunity to connect with your in-person community online. Encourage your staff to fan the page, comment, and share information. If privacy is of concern, ask your staff use Facebook lists to protect their privacy or create a separate 'work' profile page to connect.