



Step-By-Step Guide to Amazing Resident Move-Ins

A setup and strategy how-to for driving
resident satisfaction, long before move-in



A publication of **updater.**

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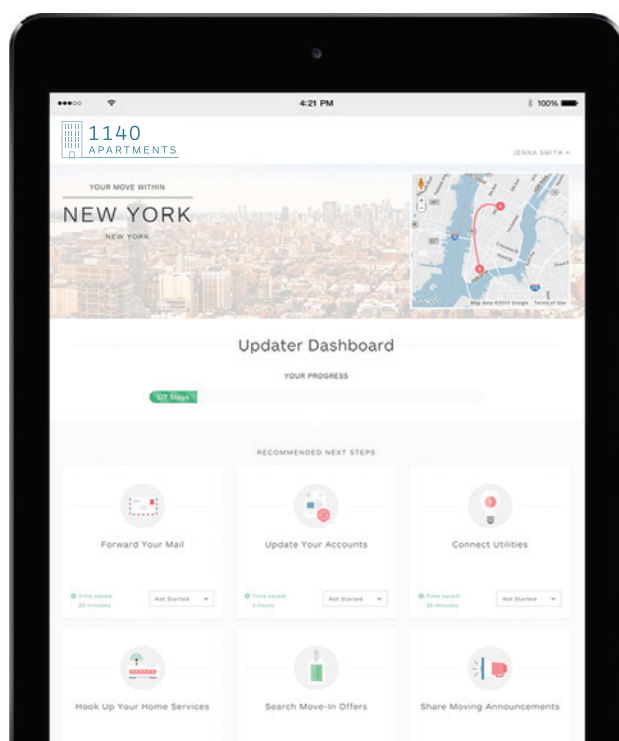
WHY RESIDENT MOVE-IN MATTERS

Did you know that the Employee Relocation Council (ERC) ranks moving as the third most stressful life event, preceded only by the death of a loved one and divorce¹?

Simply put, moving is a traumatic experience. No one enjoys it, no one gets excited about it, and it's safe to say that most people struggle at some point during a move (if not throughout the entire process!). It's true – we see it time and time again with our residents, but figuring out exactly how to help take some of that weight off of your residents' shoulders hasn't always been easy.

However, in reality, there are plenty of budget-friendly tools, tips and tricks to help improve your residents' move-in experience – without actually packing their dishes, calling the cable company, or unloading a truck.

So, where do you begin?! To start, if you want to help streamline the moving process for your residents, it's important to remember these three things: first impressions matter, personal touches matter, and most importantly – happy residents matter! Providing an excellent resident experience is critical to your bottom line. Why not delight them from the very beginning? After all, happy residents mean loyal residents, and loyal residents are more likely to advocate for your property, refer friends to your property, and ultimately, enjoy long, low-maintenance leases with your property.





Resident turnover is expensive

Each move-out costs upwards of

\$3500+
per unit



Keep residents *loyal* by starting renewal efforts before day one

While there's no magic wand to eliminate the stress of move-in for your residents (wouldn't that be amazing?), you can implement a number of quick fixes that produce impressive, long-term results. By adding these resident moving tips to your customer service toolkit, you'll earn your residents' trust and score even higher resident satisfaction ratings... *all before they've even moved in.*

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

Mom was right – first impressions *do* matter! As a property manager, you can make a good first impression and earn your residents’ trust by intervening at the exact right moment – right after lease approval.



“ The move-in is one of the first interactions that our residents experience at our properties – one that sets the tone for their entire time with us. ”

FAIRFIELD RESIDENTIAL
San Diego, CA

CREATE A CUSTOM MOVE-IN CHECKLIST

Put some time into creating a custom move-in checklist with tips that are relevant to your property. While residents can find generic “moving day” checklists online, it’s more helpful to create a thoughtful, property-specific checklist that reminds residents how to reserve the elevator on move-in day or where to pick up their mailbox key. Better yet, share the contact information for the person at your property who can answer any questions that your resident may have at the footer of your checklist.

OFFER FREE MOVING SUPPLIES

After your residents complete their leasing paperwork, save them a trip to the office supply store by offering a simple, ready-to-use moving kit complete with Sharpies, packing tape, a few boxes, and other moving essentials. Alternatively, you can designate a moving supply station in the leasing office so that residents can pick up supplies when they need them. It’s the perfect (and practical) “thank you” gift for signing a lease at your community.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

DIGITIZE EVERYTHING

Minimize clunky paperwork by digitizing everything that you can – copies of their lease, your welcome packet, a map of your community, and any other documents that you provide your residents at lease approval.



PRO-TIP: Send all the documents in a zipfile – with clear folder organization – so that your residents aren't sifting through pages of email attachments. Better yet, put everything on a branded USB, and give it to new residents at lease approval.

OFFER UPDATER

Providing an excellent resident move-in experience is all about going the extra mile, and Updater makes that job easier for property managers. Residents avoid the headaches caused by moving-related tasks by signing up for renters insurance, connecting utilities and home services, forwarding their mail, updating their accounts and records, and much more. Residents love Updater, and it consistently increases resident satisfaction both before and after their move. Even better – it requires little to no work from your staff. Win-win!



We understand how stressful moving can be, and it's important to us that we support our residents through the entire process. By partnering with Updater, we've found an easy way to save our residents hours and headaches before they even move in.



OCULUS REALTY
Gaithersburg, MD

PERSONAL TOUCHES MATTER

Nothing quite says “welcome home” like personalizing your residents’ move-in experience. Even if it’s a bit more work on your end, don’t underestimate how a few personal touches can leave a positive impression for weeks, if not months.

KEEP THE KIDS BUSY

If your new residents have kids, offer a coloring book or wordsearch to keep the little ones busy on move-in day. There are plenty of online tools available to help you create your own! Trust us – the parents will thank you for this one!

DON'T FORGET THE DOG

Don't let Fido slip underfoot on moving day! Partner with the local kennel or doggy daycare on move-in day to help relieve some major moving day stress for puppy parents. You'll avoid moving day disasters, like Fido slipping out the front door, as well as give the local doggy day care facility a chance to introduce themselves to your residents (and the pup!) in a positive light.



Pups are important, too! In fact, **33%** of apartment renters own a pet.³

PROVIDE A WARM WELCOME

Give the front desk crew at your properties a heads up that new residents are moving in so that they can introduce themselves. If your lobby has a flat screen TV, add a personalized message to the rotation, welcoming new residents to the community. Better yet, have a welcome gift with a handwritten note waiting for new residents when they walk through the door of their new home.

PERSONAL TOUCHES MATTER

DECK OUT THE FRONT DOOR

Opening up the front door to a new apartment home is a special moment for any resident. Pinterest and Etsy have *tons* of DIY tips on how to attach oversized bows to the front door. Don't worry – it won't cost a fortune because your team can re-use the bows. It's the perfect “ta-da!” touch. Plus, kids will love it!

INTRODUCE YOUR MAINTENANCE TEAM

Ask your maintenance team to swing by your residents' apartment to say “hello” on their first day in their new home. It'll put a name to a face, should your residents need to schedule a maintenance call in the future. Even better, your maintenance team can personally deliver a welcome letter to your new residents.



PRO-TIP: Include useful information in your welcome letter, like the contact information for the building's doorman or super, notes on how deliveries are handled, and when the pool opens up for the season.

STOCK THE FRIDGE

Moving is physically exhausting! Stock the fridge with cool bottles of water or maybe even a few bottles of beer (when age-appropriate!) so that your residents can cool down after a long day of moving.

LET OTHERS DO THE COOKING

Cooking dinner is the *last* thing your residents will want to do after a long day spent packing, loading, and unpacking. Leave a free coupon to the local pizza place or a few take-out menus for nearby restaurants you recommend on the kitchen counter.

HAPPY RESIDENTS MATTER

KEEP MOVE-IN DAY TOOLS AT THE READY

Searching through a stack of moving boxes for the right tool is one of the *last* things that your residents will want to do on moving day. Keep common tools and cleaning appliances at the ready – hammers, screwdrivers, brooms, and a vacuum. On moving day, your residents can simply sign out an item so that they don't have to go searching for their own.

SHARE A LIST OF TRUSTED PROVIDERS

Help your residents get to know the area! Share a list of your trusted neighborhood partners – grocery stores, paint shops, hardware stores – in lieu of a neighborhood guide. You can also compile information on neighborhood schools and any special discounts that you have at popular local restaurants or coffee shops.



PRO-TIP: You can also display all of the businesses that you work with digitally through Updater!

CONNECT WITH CURRENT RESIDENTS

Go the extra mile and invite your current residents to form a welcome committee to help you organize welcome events for new neighbors. Parents especially will love connecting with new residents so they can get the inside scoop on things happening for kids around town. If you can, give your resident community leaders a small budget to throw a couple of yearly events – maybe a Winter Welcome and a Summer Soiree.



Don't screen that call! **34%** of residents use mobile phones to communicate with property management and maintenance staff.

HAPPY RESIDENTS MATTER

OFFER AN AMENITIES TOUR - AGAIN

Most residents consider amenities before moving in, but they'll still appreciate an in-depth refresher once they're officially in their new home. Take the initiative to schedule a tour of all the amenities offered in the building *after* they've moved in. That way, your residents will be comfortable finding the garbage, working the laundry machines, or getting a refresher on protocols for using the shared pool or BBQ.



PRO-TIP: Instead of catering to every new resident, conduct the tour once a week, no matter what, and allow anyone to join the tour. It's a great way for residents to meet each other also.

LEAVE A DISPOSABLE CAMERA ON THE COUNTER

For many of your residents, moving into a new apartment is a special moment! While it's a bit old-school, leave a disposable camera on the kitchen counter so that they can snap a few "before" and "after" photos of their new place.



BONUS TIP: Maybe even include a small frame for the photos!

LET'S LEARN FROM THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

At first blush, it may not seem like the multifamily industry has a lot in common with the hospitality industry. But, when it comes down to it, a hotel stay is really just a smaller-scale, more temporary version of moving into a new place, right? And just like the multifamily industry, the hospitality industry's lifeblood is offering impeccable customer service at every stage of the guest's stay, whether that's putting a mint on the guest's pillow or offering free luggage storage.

Besides, the financial returns of offering hotel-style customer service are undeniable. It goes without saying that excellent customer satisfaction means increased customer loyalty, but it's also cheaper to maintain repeat guests than it is to find new ones. Even better, it's proven that loyal customers are far more likely to refer a hotel to their friends and family than one-time customers. This domino effect means that customer service not only gives guests the best experience possible, but also means exceeding the hotel's bottom line.⁴

Sound familiar? In the same way that hotels want repeat guests who refer family and friends, you want high resident retention and word of mouth referrals. Above all, you know how crucial customer service is to keeping residents happy.

However, like you, hotels also know that offering the bare minimum from a customer-service perspective isn't enough to stand out from the



LET'S LEARN FROM THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

competition and keep guests satisfied. By supporting their guests at every part of their stay and offering small, personal touches, hotels offer exceptional customer service that makes a lasting impact on both guests and revenue.

When it comes to going the extra mile, hotels also know the importance of keeping a balance between old school and new school service. In today's tech savvy world, guests still want small, personal touches just as much as they want their lives as digitized as possible, so it's important to tailor customer service accordingly. For example, a hotel that goes above and beyond will offer complimentary airport pickup and a free bottle of bubbly, but it will also feature self check-in kiosks and virtual tours for the more technologically-inclined. In order to stay competitive, it's important to know what guests expect, and then to exceed their expectations.

So, what can we learn from our hotel counterparts? Give your residents the hotel experience! On top of making signing the lease as simple as possible and providing resident support, go above and beyond the customer service call of duty by simplifying the moving process for your residents. Whether you switch to digital paperwork or simply share a list of neighborhood providers with your residents, you'll be well on your way to offering a premium customer experience, standing out from the competition, increasing resident retention, and boosting profits.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a seasoned property manager, you know that offering superior customer service isn't just about offering a "feel good" experience for your residents – resident satisfaction has a direct correlation to your bottom line. After all, happy residents translate into loyal residents.

The good news is that you can implement a number of low-cost but high-impact initiatives to drive resident satisfaction, starting with these tips. Remember, resident satisfaction isn't a given – it's something that you constantly have to work for. And for successful property managers, that all starts before day one.

updater.

LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT US

So – what is Updater anyway? Updater is a digital moving amenity that helps your residents save time on their moving-related tasks. With Updater, residents are able to seamlessly sign up for renters insurance, transfer utilities, update accounts and records, forward mail, send digital moving announcements, and much more. Best yet, it's branded and personalized for your property and customized for each resident. One of the fastest growing companies in the multifamily industry, Updater works with apartment communities of all shapes and sizes across the country, and has received numerous awards in recognition of its technology innovation. Among others, Updater won the Launch Pad competition at the 2015 National Multifamily Housing Council's annual OPTech Conference & Exposition, as well as a 2015 & 2016 American Business Award for the Most Innovative Tech Company of the Year.

[Learn More](#)

RESIDENT SATISFACTION CHECKLIST

Improve your resident move-in experience with this simple punch list.

Use this worksheet to start checking off new ideas today.

- Offer a move-in kit filled with moving tape, Sharpies, etc.
- Digitize *all* documentation including the lease, a map of your community, etc.
- Create a move-in day checklist, customized with specific “to-dos” at your property
- Offer Updater, and save residents hours on dreaded moving tasks
- Hand out coloring books or word searches to keep the kids busy on move-in day
- Offer free doggy daycare service to residents with pets
- Give the front desk a heads up that new residents are moving in
- Leave an oversized bow on the front door
- Have your maintenance team stop by to introduce themselves
- Stock the fridge with move-in day essentials (water, a few snacks)
- Leave coupons to the local pizza place on the counter
- Lend out common move-in day tools (hammers, wrenches, vacuums)
- Share a list of your favorite neighborhood providers (restaurants, gyms, etc.)
- Introduce new residents to existing residents
- Offer an amenities tour post move-in to show residents around their new home
- Leave a disposable camera on the counter to capture the move-in day experience

Sources

¹ <http://www.worldwideerc.org/Pages/index.aspx>

² <http://www.satisfacts.com/Services/tabid/57/Default.aspx>

³ <https://nmhc.org/News/New-Largest-Ever-Apartment-Rental-Survey-Highlights-Amenities-Consumers-Want/>

⁴ <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/518e58afe4b0a66536acf664/t/538c9d98e4b06b14cf93914a/1401724312665/2009+satisfaction+%26+performance+-+IJHM-2.pdf>