

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL RENTAL AD



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Introduction

The process of filling a rental property always starts with the outer layer. In other words, the outer layer is the first impression—everything that is attractive to potential renters, from the ad to the fine details of your property.

Understand that renters who are looking to move are absolutely inundated with options. Reading a boring advertisement about a vacancy in a newspaper or online is one thing. Go above and beyond possible tenants' expectations by romancing potential renters with visuals. Court them with detailed copywriting. Play up your property's best features by following this complete guide so you can put all of the pieces of the puzzle together.

At first, it may seem daunting, but by leveraging Renters Warehouse (and our industry-leading 17-day average for tenant placement), vacancy could become a thing of the past.

A Little Psychology Refresher

What affects human behavior?

There are actually a few factors that go into influencing and affecting consumer behavior:

Problem recognition: Realizing something is not necessarily the way it should be.

Information search: Finding alternative ways to solve the problem.

Evaluation of alternatives: Weighing available options.

Each of these factors plays into the consumer's decision-making process. Some people will most likely go back and forth between any or all of the above stages.

Often, many people will spend the most time in the information search and evaluation of alternatives stages prior to making a decision. So at this point, it is absolutely critical to make a lasting impression on the renter.

Emotional tipping points (someone who has a more urgent need might be easier to appeal to - "move in right away!")

So what triggers should you consider leveraging for maximum impact? There is no one answer to this, but some triggers are liable to resonate more with some than with others.

Tiny triggers like visuals, sounds, are memorable.

Which of the following two ads appeal to you?

Ad Sample #1

Two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment available for rent. Call Fred at 555-555-1234.

Ad Sample #2

Amazing two bedroom, one bath apartment centrally-located in quiet and secure building downtown. Unit boasts gorgeous hardwood floors, updated stainless steel appliances, and recently-renovated bathroom. Complex offers parking as well as a private courtyard.

Chances are that the second ad would be more appealing to a potential renter, because it was more detailed and contained more visual language than the first ad. If you have to rely solely on words (no pictures), you want to do your best to use descriptive language that provides powerful imagery of the property for your potential tenant.

Manicures & Pedicures: Preparation is Everything

So you think you're ready to welcome prospective tenants into your building for a viewing of your property? Apartment viewings are very much like a first date. You want to put forth your best self by paying attention to the nitty-gritty details. You only have one chance to impress and a well-cared-for property will be the defining factor between a successful showing and an unsuccessful showing.

You can make sure you're ready by following these easy steps:

1. **Clear the clutter:** Walk around your property and identify any potential problem areas. You want to showcase an organized property. Ensure that any common areas, like the lobby, garbage

room and hallways, are well-organized.

2. **Freshen up the decor:** Don't leave any fixture unturned. This includes (but is not limited to) things like thermostats, drapery tracks, curtains, mirrors, light fixtures, carpets and appliances. People tend to notice these details. You don't want to turn a potential renter off because you felt that keeping that awful shag carpet was a good idea, right?
3. **Consider the color:** Did you know that apartment appeal (first indoor impressions) is considered to be the most important factor to over 18% of renters? Don't be afraid to inject some personality into your paint colors, style, and staging. Beige is nice and neutral (and recommended), but sometimes vibrant colors help appease the most discriminating tastes.
4. **Curb appeal:** You can use the fanciest words known to man to describe your property, but if the outside of your building fails to deliver that "wow" factor, you might be in for an uphill battle no matter what is waiting inside. You want your tenants to be welcomed by a well-manicured property. Tenants often want to feel proud of where they might call home.

Apartment viewings are very much like a first date. You only have one chance to impress.

5. **Images/rooms to include:** A picture is worth a thousand words. With your pictures, you want to help people visualize living in your property. While it is unnecessary to take pictures from every possible angle in the property, highlighting main living areas such as the kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms are a must. Bathroom photos and building exteriors are also a good idea.

Lighting is Everything

The true first impression occurs the moment possible renters lay their eyes on the images in your ad. There are a few important things to keep in mind when it comes to getting the “perfect shot” of your property:

Keep it light and bright - Achieving the perfect balance between properly-lit and under or over-lit can involve a lot of trial and error. If you are relying on natural light to illuminate a room, shoot your pictures in the early morning or late afternoon for maximum soft-light exposure. If capturing natural light isn't in the cards, you may need to add or remove lamps to help achieve that warmth.

Illusions and tips to create more space with lights and mirrors - A well-placed mirror can do wonders for helping maximize a room's potential. There are a number of specific key locations that can help you achieve a spacious look for your apartment.

Print vs. Digital Ad vs. Video Tours

How do you go about getting the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to advertising that you have a vacancy? In a perfect world, a random social media post would bring the perfect tenant to your doorstep.

Unfortunately, that isn't the reality.

Renters are absolutely deluged with options on where to find the next place they will call

home. Nonetheless, the mediums of print, digital ads and video each have their own attributes that are worth considering:

1. **The benefits of Print:** As much as it is touted that newspapers are soon going to be a thing of the past, there is still a vast audience for the medium. The upside to the perception that print is dying; fewer ads from other property managers. A print ad is tangible and is still considered to be one of the more legitimate forms of advertising.
2. **The benefits of Digital Ads:** Aside from the immediacy that a digital ad offers, there is also the potential for unlimited space for photos and videos (if applicable). As long as people have an internet connection, theoretically, your ad stands to be noticed. And the cost of online ads is much cheaper than traditional print advertising. And when more than 70 percent of renters start their apartment search online, using digital ads is a no-brainer.

70% of renters start their apartment search online. Creating catchy and informative ads with beautiful photos is a must.

3. **The benefits of Video:** This should go without saying, but the biggest benefit of offering people a video tour of your property is that you are letting the video do the initial heavy lifting. Videos are generally considered to be more appealing than a straight online ad. If you want to stand out from your

competition, a video ad just might be what gives you the edge.

4. **What gets the best results or types of results/tenants:** Online sites like Craigslist are known to produce a lot of calls and emails, but be prepared to get a lot of spam too. (Paid subscription advertising can help you avoid spam and effectively reach targeted networks.) Virtual tours tend to produce the most interested tenants. And print ads let you do niche targeting, giving you a better chance of getting in touch with your ideal tenant.
5. **Trend to keep an eye on?** More and more investors are using property managers for tenant placement and ongoing management. At the beginning of 2013, the FHFA began selling foreclosed properties to institutional investors who agree to hold and manage them as rentals. With the influx of unmanaged properties, these corporations began leaning on companies like Renters Warehouse for help. And the trend continues to grow.

Choose Your Words Carefully

1. Features you should always list to attract tenants (if your property has them): the location, renovations, open floor plans, stainless steel appliances, hardwood floors and some carpeting, available parking, laundry in the building/unit, large windows, and high ceilings.
2. Sticks and stones may break your bones, but the right words will attract
3. The right renter. Use engaging descriptive words and phrases like “beautiful,” “turn-key,” “spacious,”

“fabulous layout,” and “backyard paradise.”

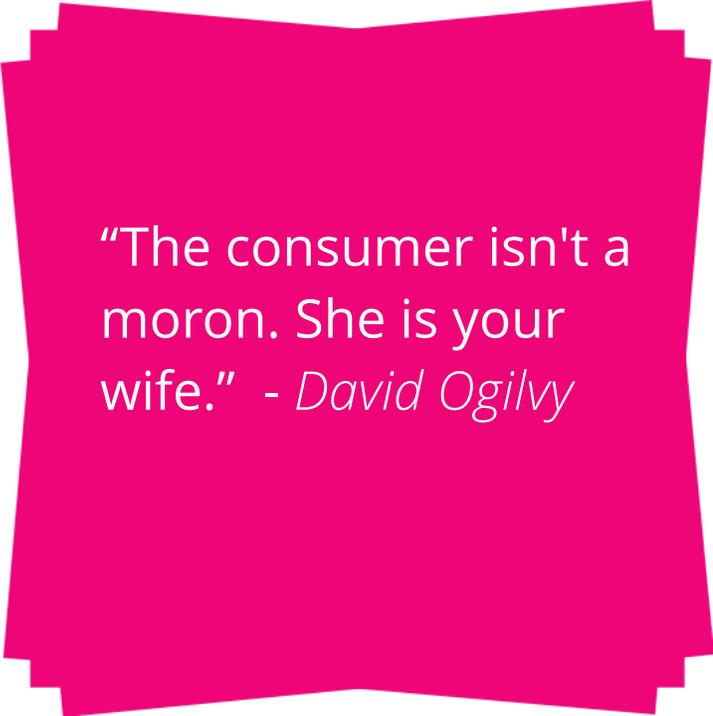
4. The length of your ad depends on your format and budget. Newspaper ads have strict word counts, so keep that in mind when drafting your copy. Video tours should be short and informational, so you can hold a possible tenant’s attention as long as possible. As a rule of thumb, try to be concise as possible while highlighting the necessary features and amenities. You don’t want a possible renter to feel bogged down with too much information.
5. Don’t forget to include the basic specs of the apartment (number of bedrooms and bathrooms), monthly rent, and date of availability.

Test, Test, Test

1. No bites? Don’t panic. There are incremental changes you can make to your ad, like triple checking that the information is updated and correct, as well as providing several ways to contact you (email, phone number, website, etc.).
2. Your ad might not be attracting offers because your photos are hard to see and don’t convey the right information (a picture of a wall does no one any good), your ad is not creative enough, or you’re not listing the best features of the unit.
3. Channels you should try if you haven’t already: Trulia and Craigslist.
4. Do your research. A simple scan of existing ads can go a long way. Existing ads can serve as a useful basis for comparison.

Conclusion

While every lease may be different, the world of advertising (for anything) is an art and a science. But you can learn a lot from expert advice, existing ads and plain ol' experimentation.



"The consumer isn't a moron. She is your wife." - *David Ogilvy*

Putting together a successful rental ad might feel downright overwhelming, but breaking down the process into these actionable steps will make the process less daunting. Just remember that these steps are not one-size-fits-all. The "perfect" formula varies by location and target audience.

If you need help with tenant placement and creating a great ad, Renters Warehouse is here to help. Take a look at our [Professional Landlord services](#) and [FREE Rental Price Analysis](#). Let us help you find the right tenant, take care of maintenance, and make sure your properties are safe and rented.

If you have any landlord and property management questions, we are also happy to answer them. Tweet at us [@ProLandlord](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page.