



# SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR MULTIFAMILY

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*WHY SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPORTANT TO APARTMENT  
COMMUNITIES AND HOW IT CAN HELP*

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# Building relationships, retaining customers and attracting new ones are three of the most important factors in an apartment community's success.

And one of the very best ways to connect with your residents -- current and prospective -- is through social media.

Once viewed as a place to mindlessly pass the time, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are now considered crucial tools for every business to master. Surprisingly, there are countless dead social media accounts for apartment communities, a sign that many have given up.

Whether you need to breathe new life into your social media efforts or you're new to the process, know that the work can pay off if done the right way.

## HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE BENEFITS:

### ***Better website rankings.***

Social signals, including likes and shares, are not directly related to how a website ranks in search engine results, according to Google. But these signals can amplify the ranking factors that Google does consider. The better the ranking, the higher it will appear in Google search results.

### ***An edge over the competition.***

A community's social media presence matters to residents. In fact, a [2018 study](#) showed that it's a factor in a resident's decision to renew their lease. If your community's social media presence is robust and active, it demonstrates that you're more likely to be responsive to the needs of your residents. Communities with less of a presence could fall behind.

### ***Increased brand awareness.***

Prospects want to know what kind of lifestyle they can expect if they live in your community, what kinds of amenities are offered, or if the community places importance on environmentally conscious features and practices.

### ***Stronger community.***

Relationship marketing is all about establishing long-term bonds with residents so they're satisfied enough to continue renewing their leases or, if they move out, they choose other communities that are part of your brand.

This guide explains the best ways to use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to engage with residents and prospects, enhance your customer service, manage your reputation, and advertise your community.

# SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

**PART 1:** HOW TO ENGAGE WITH RESIDENTS AND PROSPECTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

**PART 2:** ENHANCE YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

**PART 3:** MANAGING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION

**PART 4:** USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVERTISE YOUR COMMUNITY

**PART 5:** LEVERAGING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA DURING COVID-19



# Understanding the differences between Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Before we get started, it's crucial to understand that these three platforms have significant differences.



**Facebook**  
I like apartments



**Instagram**  
Here's a photo of my apartment



**Twitter**  
I love my #apartment

## Facebook

**Purpose:** To connect people with their friends and family. Facebook users generally share photos, videos, and life updates.

**Demographics:** About 70% of adults in the U.S. are on Facebook. More than 80% of Americans ages 18-29 use the platform, while 65% of people ages 50 and older do as well.

**Frequency:** Users tend to check Facebook an average of eight times per day.

## Twitter

**Purpose:** To share real-time information, ideas and trending news.

**Demographics:** The total number of Twitter users in the U.S. is 22%. Twitter users tend to skew younger -- 40% of Twitter users are 18-29, while less than 20% of Americans ages 50 and above use it.

**Frequency:** Twitter users check their feeds about five times per day.

## Instagram

**Purpose:** To share photos and videos from a smartphone.

**Demographics:** About 32% of the U.S. population use Instagram. People under 35 make up more than 70% of the platform's users. People ages 35 to 54 make up 23% of total Instagram users.

**Frequency:** About 63% of Instagram users log in at least once per day.

# PART 1:

## HOW TO ENGAGE WITH RESIDENTS AND PROSPECTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



# How to Get Resident Followers:

If you're wondering how to get residents to follow your community on social media, try building it into your new resident onboarding process. Create the expectation that residents will find value in your apartment social media content, and that they'll miss out if they don't follow you.

You can use the same enticements to get longer-term residents to follow. Share useful, high-quality content, hold contests, and make special offers available through the community's social media channels only. Word will spread about the value in following the community, and you should see your follower count rise.

## FACEBOOK: GETTING STARTED

- Set up a Business Page rather than a personal profile.
- Enter your business information (address, phone number, street address, website, hours), as well as upload a profile photo and a cover photo.
- Fill in the *About* section and explain what makes your community special.
- Post at least two or three times per week to keep your followers engaged.

## POSTING TO FACEBOOK

*It's important to share content on a regular basis that's both relevant and interesting. Here are some ideas to check off each month:*

**Articles related to apartment living.** Follow publications like *Apartment Therapy* or *Domino* and start sharing posts that apartment residents would find useful. For example, content about decorating a rental, storage solutions, the best furniture for small spaces, and organizing.

**Content about local happenings.** Residents who are brand new to your area as well as longtime residents could benefit from posts related to things to do in your area. Share articles about things that look fun that your community members might be interested in.

**Photos of your team.** Residents want to be able to connect a name with a face, and this will allow you to do that. Share pictures of your leasing staff and management team and let residents know how to reach them.

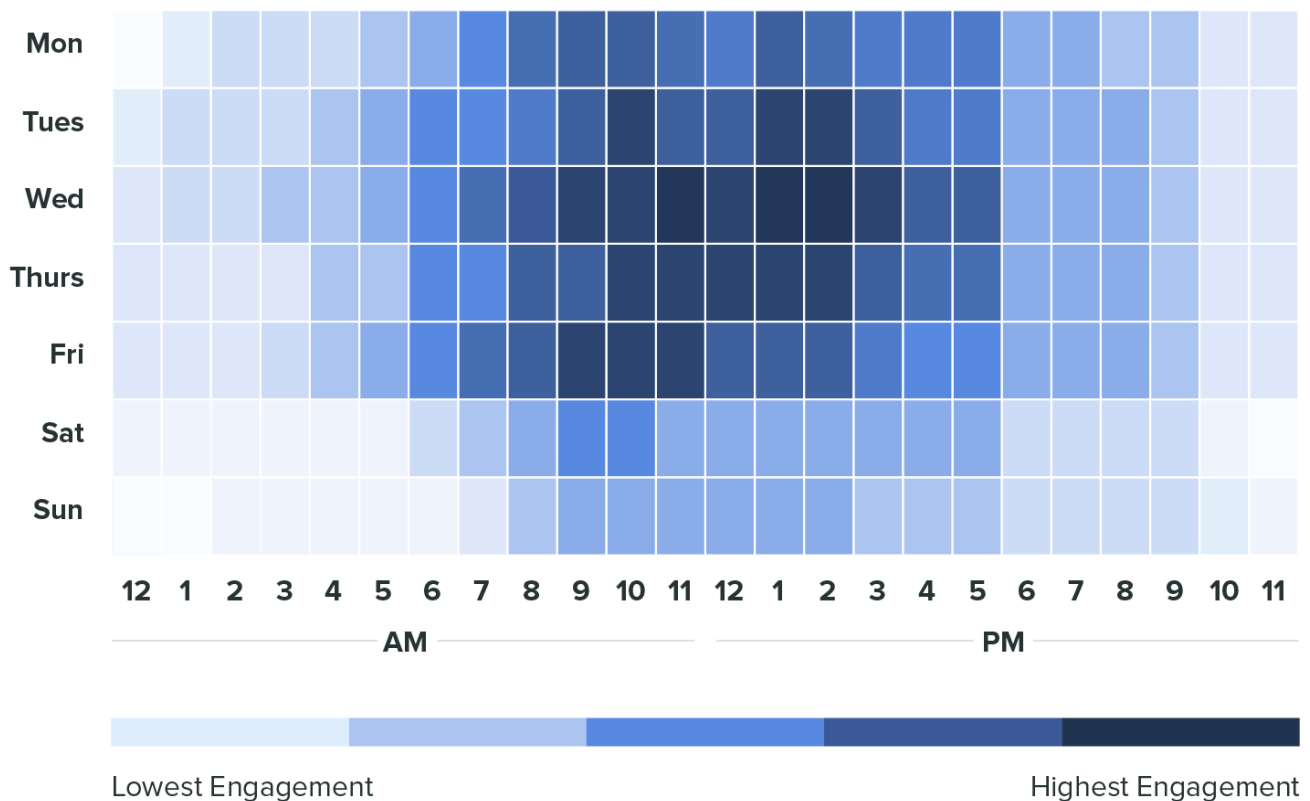
- Community news and events.** Inform residents of upcoming community-wide events as well as announcements related to the property. Make sure to also email residents the same information, especially if it's time sensitive.
- Resident profiles.** Showing a photo or two of the residents, along with a few bullet points can help foster a sense of community, and it could also be a way for residents to network with each other.
- Rent specials and promotions.** Keep in mind that most of your followers will likely already be residents of your community. Promotional content is fine to share, but it should not be excessive. Consider trying Facebook advertising to promote your community and bring in new residents.

## BEST TIMES TO POST ON FACEBOOK

With more than two billion active users, it makes sense to post your content when the most people will see it. According to various sources, the best times to post on Facebook are:

### Facebook Global Engagement

sproutsocial



## TWITTER: GETTING STARTED

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- Consistency is key, so use the same profile and cover photo for both Twitter and Facebook.
- For your profile, come up with a concise description of your community, and also include your location and website.
- Unlike Facebook, you will want to Tweet more often. Tweets have a very short shelf life, and most retweets happen within an hour after tweeting, so aim for a minimum of three times per day.

## TWEETING

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Consider tweeting a mix of original content, curated content and educational content. Here are some examples:

**Original content.** This is the content you create, like photos of new renovations or community events. This could also mean community news and announcements.

**Curated content.** Share content from other sources that your residents might find useful, such as articles from local news sources about new restaurants or articles from lifestyle magazines on apartment living.

**Educational content.** While this content is promotional, try not to deliver sales pitches. Instead, shine a light on what it's like to live in your community. Think about what makes it unique and take a storytelling approach to share a slice of life.



Here are some ideas for each of these categories to check off each month:

## Original Content

- Share community event announcements and include a hashtag.
- Post photos of the event during and after the event, using the same hashtag.
- Take part in *Throwback Thursday* by including photos of your community prior to renovations or before certain amenities were added. Use the #TBT hashtag.
- Share news about important happenings, like changes to the way residents pay rent or upcoming maintenance work around the community.
- Remind residents of things like road closures, when and where to vote, and other news they can use.
- Use the National Calendar to share unique days like *World Kindness Day* or *National Family PJ Day*.
- Join a trending conversation if it's appropriate for your brand.
- Announce a fun pop-up activity, such as free breakfast-to-go or a wine and cheese tasting.
- Congratulate a team member for a life event or accomplishment.
- Offer a preview of upcoming renovations or changes to your community.
- Highlight and welcome a new restaurant or other business located near your community.

## Curated Content

- Share apartment living content from an online magazine or blog.
- Retweet an announcement about a new local business opening nearby.
- Link to weather safety tips for the season.
- Share a video related to DIY projects, apartment decorating or organizing tips.
- Link to articles on upcoming events in your city, like festivals, restaurant weeks, or farmers markets.
- Share seasonal content, like tips on decorating your apartment for the holidays or recipes.

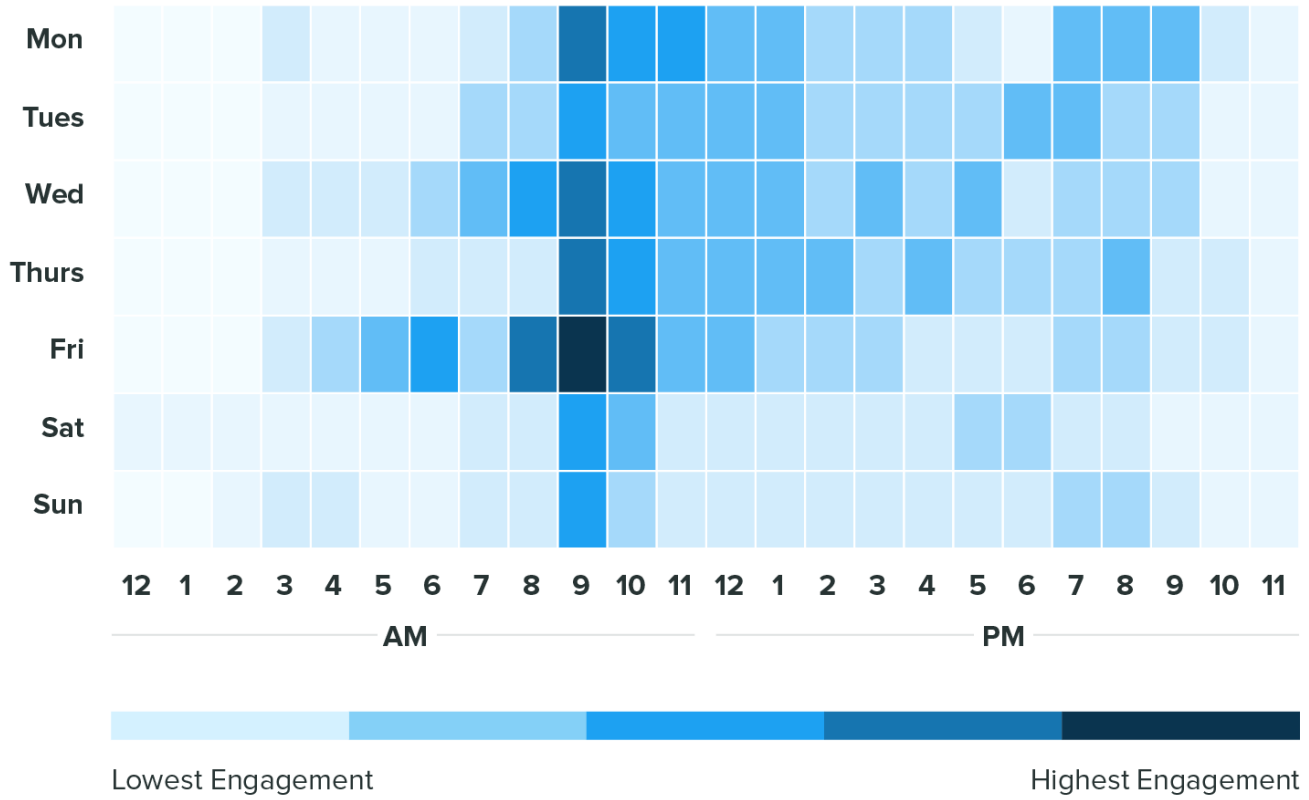
## Educational Content

- Share photos of residents enjoying your amenities.
- Start a Pet of the Month feature and have residents cast their votes.
- Hold a holiday decorating contest and ask residents to tag their entries with a certain hashtag.
- Post photos of everyday life in your community, focusing on what makes it unique.
- Recognize a resident for an accomplishment, like completing a marathon.
- Highlight sought-after features that your community offers, like eco-friendly practices and explain why they're important.
- Host a guest tweeter, which could be a resident or a member of your onsite team, and show a day or week through their eyes.

# BEST TIMES TO POST ON TWITTER

## Twitter Recreational Engagement

sproutsocial



## INSTAGRAM: GETTING STARTED

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- Instagram is primarily a mobile app, so either download it or, if you have your own Instagram account, establish a business account for your apartment community. Designating it as a business account gives you access to account insights to help you measure the success of what you post.
- Enable the *Contact* button so followers can connect with you directly.
- Again, consistency is key, so use the same profile picture as you use on Facebook and Twitter.
- Write a compelling bio and add a link to your website.
- Instagram is all about quality over quantity, so post 2-3 times per week. Ensure that what you're sharing is visually interesting.
- Take advantage of Instagram's photo editing tools and filters to enhance your images. You can also try using an app specifically for photo editing, like Adobe Lightroom or VSCO.

## POSTING TO INSTAGRAM

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Unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram is all about photos and videos. **Here are some tips on how to get the most engagement out of the content you share.**

### Use hashtags strategically

- Instagram has integrated hashtags into key functionalities of the app, specifically search.
- Users can search for particular content using hashtags or keywords, meaning that if you use the right hashtags, your content will be easier to find for interested users.
- While Twitter calls for two hashtags at the most, you should aim for a minimum of 11 hashtags per post on Instagram.

### Use Instagram stories

- Posting photos and videos to your feed isn't the only way to create content on this platform.
- Instagram Stories allows users to combine multiple images and videos into one longer piece of content that disappears after 24 hours.



## Get creative

- Instagram's earliest adopters were photographers and artists who recognized the value of capturing and sharing breathtaking images.
- Even though the platform's users have expanded, creative content is still highly valued.
- So, look for visually interesting angles around your community and enhance your photos with filters.



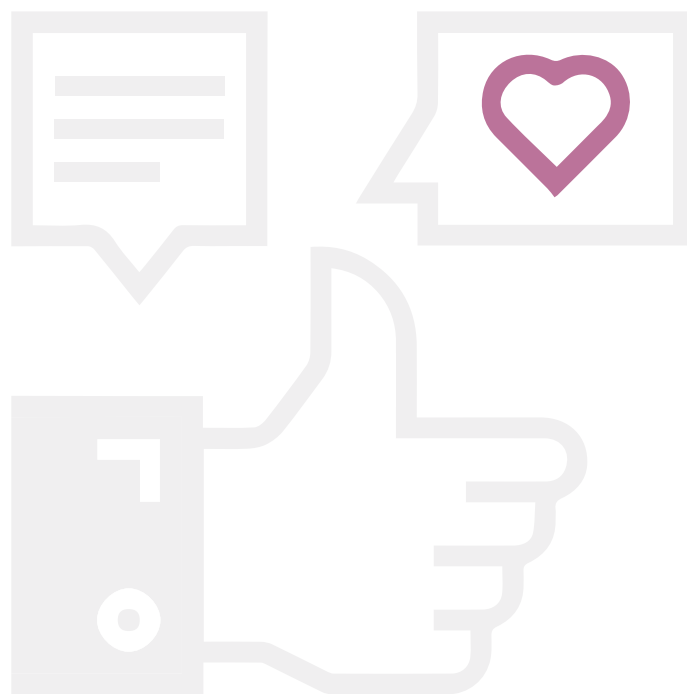
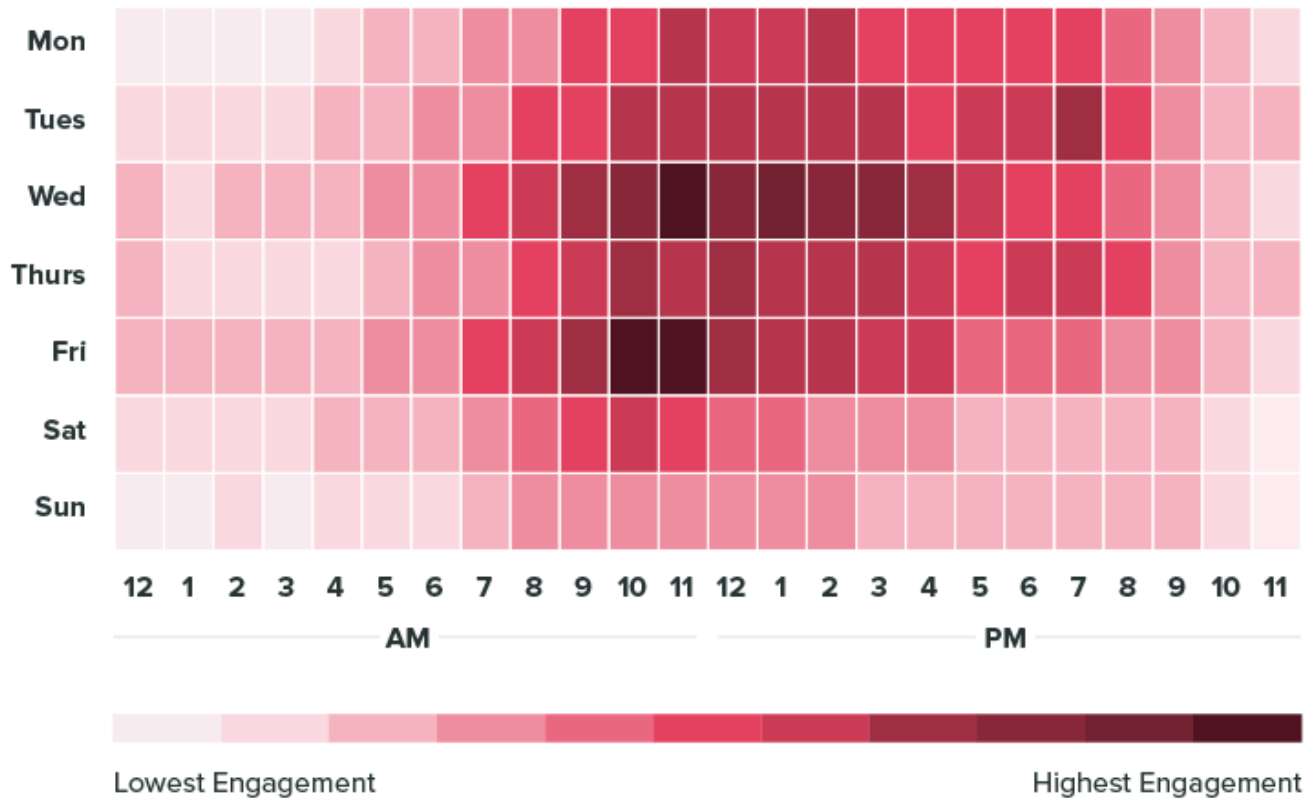
## Work around the app's limitations

- Instagram doesn't allow clickable links within captions and it only allows one link in the bio section of your profile.
- So, you can either change that bio link every time you want to send users to your website, or you can use a bio link tool like Linktree that houses all of the content you're driving followers to.

# BEST TIMES TO POST ON INSTAGRAM

## Instagram Global Engagement

sproutsocial



# USER-GENERATED CONTENT: EMPOWER YOUR BEST MARKETERS - YOUR RESIDENTS

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Do you have happy residents who post content that shows your apartment community in a favorable light? These are your ambassadors. **User-generated content (or UGC for short)** generally receives the most engagement out of all forms of social media content.

## What is UGC?

**User-generated content** (or UGC for short) promotes a brand or business and it's created by customers who genuinely believe in the product or service. UGC is valuable for apartment marketing because it amplifies the voices of residents — which are viewed as more credible than corporate messaging — and it's also very cost-effective.

Use UGC in your apartment marketing strategy by ensuring that all of your apartment social media platforms have some of this content built into it. Mixing in UGC with your regular apartment social media content can also boost the trustworthiness of your brand messaging. To make sure you're able to capture your community's UGC, come up with a hashtag and encourage your residents to use it.

## How to Get UGC

Create situations in which residents will want to generate their own posts relating to your community. For example, host events like food truck nights and wine tastings, and encourage residents to tag your community in any content they share. Then you can share their content on your community Facebook page.

- This happens when people share photos or videos featuring your brand.
- For example, if a resident spends the day at your community pool and shares photos, you can then share that content with your own audience.
- UGC is valuable because it exposes your apartment community to a wider audience and it gives your credibility a boost, too.

**Community Branded Content** from Respage uses A.I. to get visually stimulating apartment social media content from your own residents. And it's all automated, requiring little to no work from your staff. Your residents have the option to be tagged and they will be notified when their posts are up.

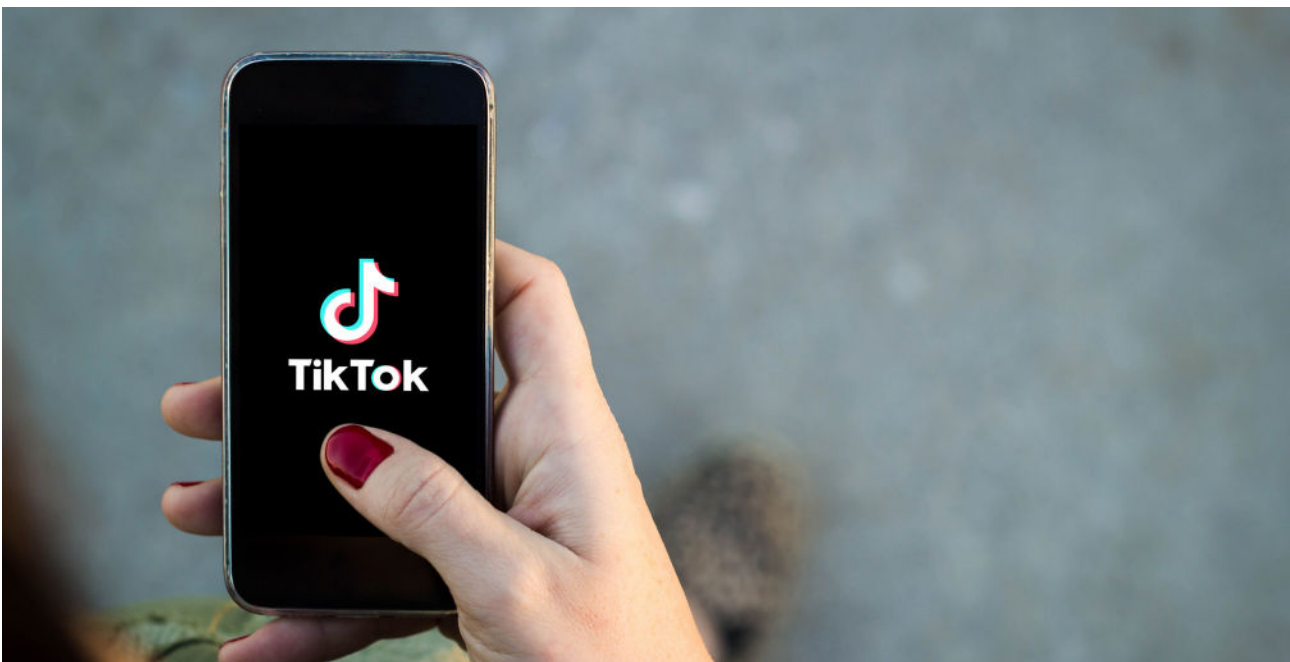
## TIKTOK: HOW TO USE IT FOR APARTMENT MARKETING

TikTok's short, user-generated videos, which have built-in filters, effects and music, tend to be lighthearted and fun. TikTok has exploded in popularity since the Coronavirus pandemic, so smart apartment marketers are coming up with ways to incorporate the platform into their overall marketing strategy.

### HERE'S WHY:

- About a quarter of TikTok users are between 20 and 29 years old, so the demographics of TikTok users and apartment residents have some overlap. TikTok could be a powerful way for apartment marketers to reach prospects where they are.
- Multifamily has been slow to jump on the TikTok train, so you could set your apartment community apart by embracing it.

***Keep in mind that TikTok is a fun platform, so have fun with it! You can house your classic apartment tour videos on your website and think of TikTok as a creative addition to your existing marketing strategy. Here are some content ideas for TikTok to get you started. With a little creativity, you could grab the attention of users who might then become your new residents.***



**Flip the switch with a twist.** For this video, use the song “Nonstop” by Drake, which has a lyric, “I just flipped a switch.” Start with a sweeping video of a room in an empty apartment. When it gets to that part of the song, switch to a sweeping view of the same apartment, only decorated. The original concept involves people switching places and has been replicated by millions of people worldwide.

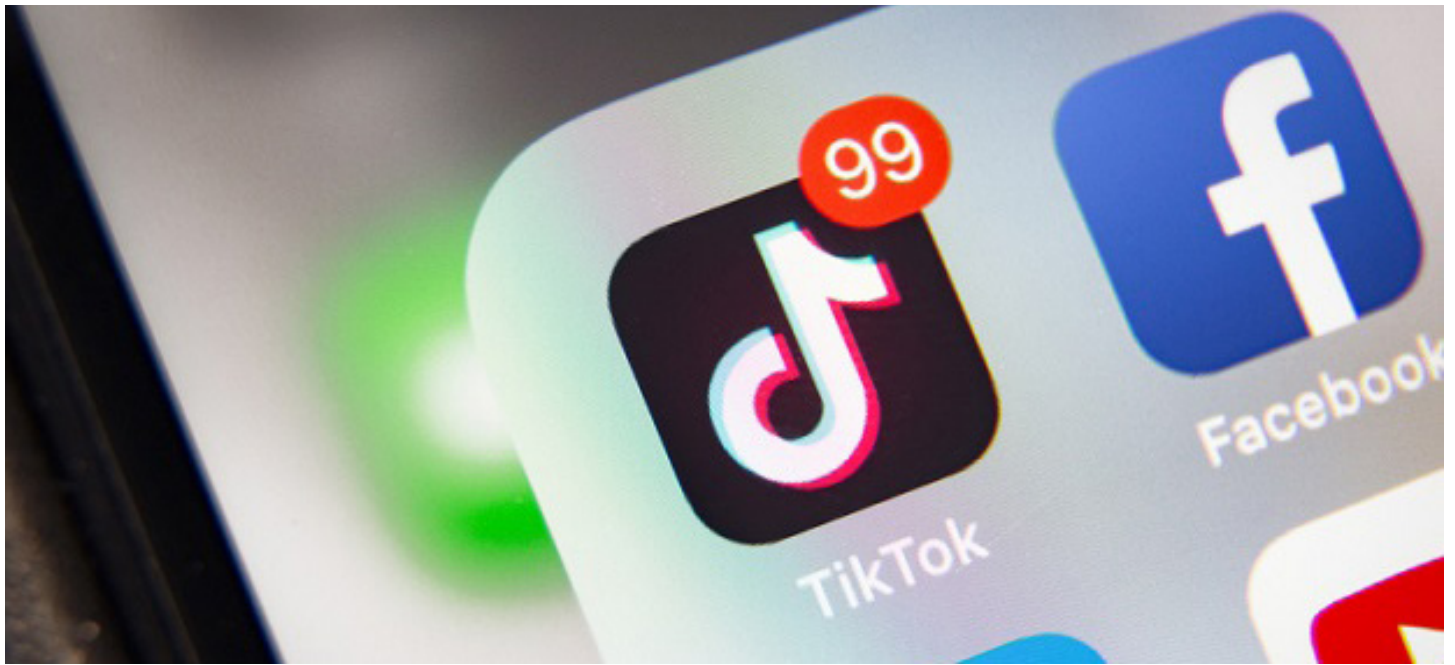
**Film a sitcom intro.** TikTok’s vast music library includes sitcom themes, which makes it easy to shoot a video inspired by a show like *The Office*. Film your team members doing things around your community, like opening the leasing office door and waving, stepping off the elevator, and vacuuming. Add text identifying each team member just like a television show does for actors.

**Do a resident takeover.** Find out if any of your residents are active (and have a following) on TikTok and ask them to take over your apartment community’s account for a day. You can set some parameters to keep it consistent with your brand, then let them run with it. Sweeten the deal by offering perks, like a premium parking spot for free in exchange for their content.

**Try some apartment-centric challenges.** TikTok challenges combine text, sound, and movement and can be done alone or with a group. There are many that would work well for an apartment community team. The Fridge Challenge, for example, involves people pulling odd things from their refrigerator, like books, skateboards, and musical instruments. The Wipe it Down Challenge is another easy one. It begins with someone wearing one outfit as they wipe down a mirror, then as they continue wiping, they appear in a new outfit.

**Sanitize in style.** This takes a playful look at our current reality. First, get some cleaning spray and a rag. Then have one of your team members spray down areas of your apartment community like doorknobs and handrails, while dancing and lip syncing to the song “Pew Pew Pew” by Auntie Hammie. Make it more fun by adding special effects!

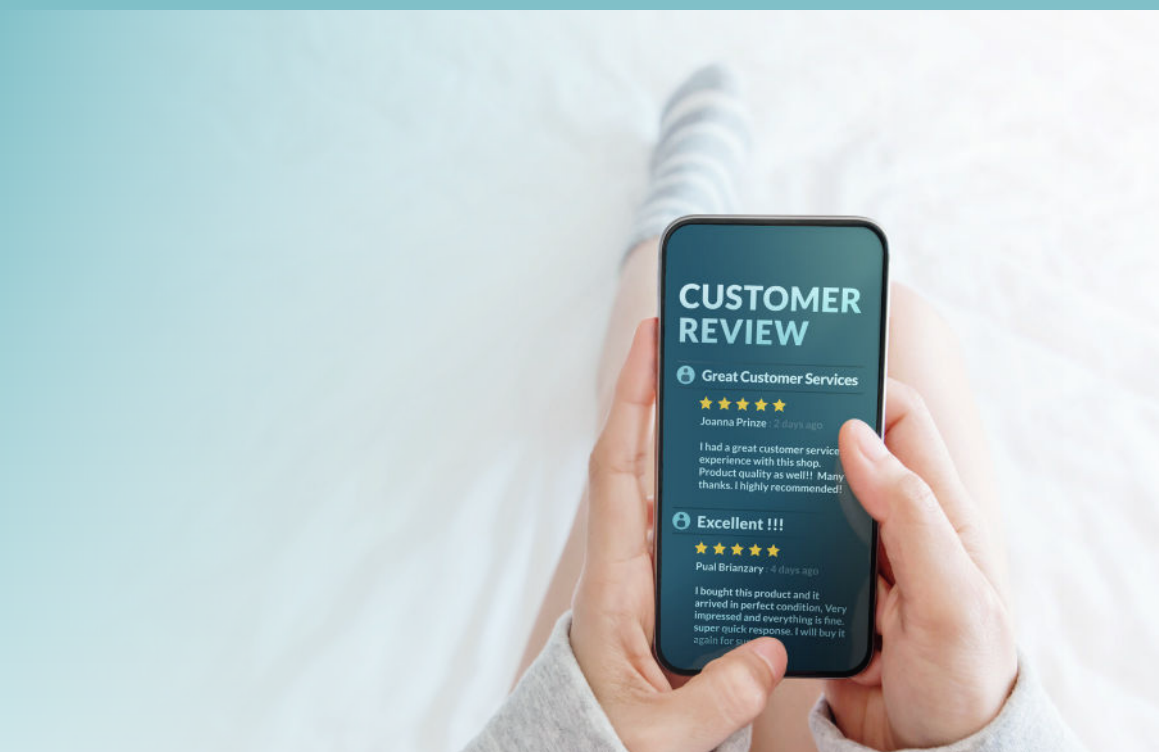




- Involve the pets.** Get your resident cats and dogs in on the TikTok action by trying the Level Up challenge, where you line up some toilet paper rolls in a hallway and encourage the pet to jump over them. Continue adding to the wall of rolls to see if they can jump higher. You can have residents try the challenge or “borrow” a pet and film in the leasing office. This would make a great contest for residents, too, and there could be a prize for the pet that can clear the tallest wall of rolls.
- Show off a “super lonely” apartment.** TikTok is all about dance challenges. The Supaloney challenge involves a set of dance moves done to the song of the same name by singer Benee. Find some team members who know the choreography (or are willing to learn!) and film them performing in a vacant -- or a “super lonely” -- apartment that’s waiting for its new residents.
- Things that “just make sense” in your apartments.** Trending right now are videos of TikTok users showing off features of their homes that “just make sense.” Some of these are snarky and highlight things that definitely do not make sense. Others are ironic and show off random things that don’t make much sense (we’re looking at you, rose gold quesadilla maker). Instead, take an apartment marketing angle and point out apartment unit and community features that actually do make sense, like smart thermostats and valet trash. Bonus points for highlighting features unique to your community.

# PART 2:

# ENHANCE YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA



*Your community's response time on Facebook is clearly shown on your page. Facebook only considers your community "very responsive" if you reply within five minutes or less, around the clock. A good rule to follow is to always be the last message sent in the exchange.*

**Simply having a social media presence isn't enough anymore.**

Research from the Institute of Customer Service shows that one in every three customers has turned to social media to seek advice or communicate with a business. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, residents and prospects expect a quick reply when they reach out to you through social media.



It's especially important to show prospects that you care. They might be considering several apartment communities, and the one that responds promptly with a helpful reply will demonstrate to prospects that they can expect the same level of customer service if they decide to live there.

## KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND WHEN CONNECTING WITH PROSPECTS OR RESIDENTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:

- 1. Respond to all social media comments, questions, and feedback.** It's important to do this because not doing so is equal to ignoring the person. Merely acknowledging positive comments with a "like" won't cut it, either.
- 2. Reply as quickly as possible.** The immediacy of social media has raised expectations. In fact, Edison Research found that 42% of consumers expect a customer service response on social media within 60 minutes. A slow response time can cause customers to:

- Tell friends and family about the experience
- Use another channel to reach you (social media, email, review site) and escalate their concerns
- Complain publicly on social media
- Decide to rent from another community or, if they are a resident, decide not to renew their lease



42%

of consumers expect a customer service response on social media within

60 minutes



- 3. Use the right tone.** This is very important when it comes to customer service in general. The easiest way to get the tone right is to match the customer. For example, if the resident or prospect sounds frustrated, turn up the empathy and use a tone that's apologetic and understanding. If the person uses emoticons and exclamation points, feel free to do the same. If it sounds like they might not be completely fluent in English, avoid slang and idioms.
- 4. Take things offline if necessary, but do it correctly.** Not everything can be resolved via social media, so at times a phone call, email or in-person meeting is the best course of action. Make sure to do this correctly, though, since getting passed around from one person or one platform to another can be annoying. Use a friendly, helpful tone and let them know you're eager to make things right.

## UPDATING YOUR RESIDENTS ABOUT COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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A big part of providing great customer service is maintaining an open line of communication with your residents. Posting updates on new policies and restrictions related to COVID-19 on social media is a good start.

# HERE'S ARE SOME TIPS



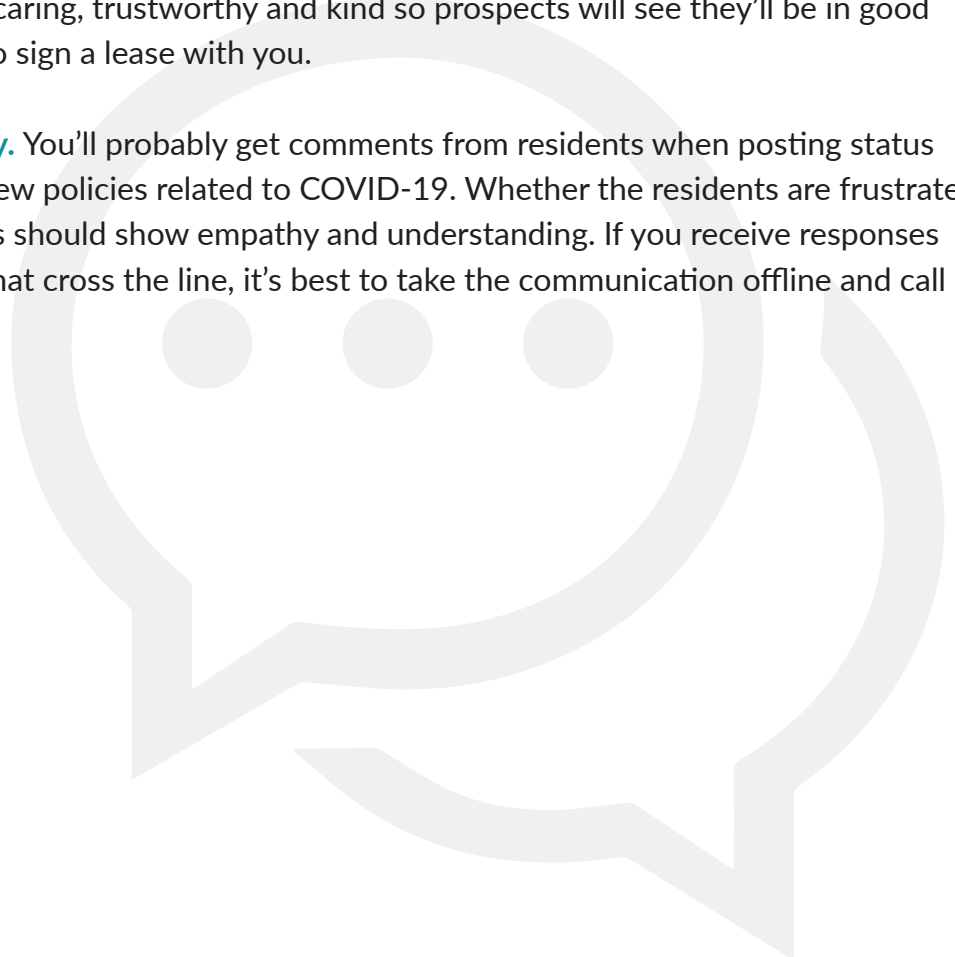
**Take a multi-platform approach.** There's a chance that some of your residents don't use social media regularly or not at all. Or if they do, they might not follow your apartment community. So, send your updates through your resident portal or via email in addition to posting on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.



**Keep your audience in mind.** You're aiming your messaging at your residents, but prospects are also interested in seeing how you're handling the pandemic. As with all communications, maintain a tone that's caring, trustworthy and kind so prospects will see they'll be in good hands if they choose to sign a lease with you.



**Respond with empathy.** You'll probably get comments from residents when posting status updates that include new policies related to COVID-19. Whether the residents are frustrated or grateful, your replies should show empathy and understanding. If you receive responses from angry residents that cross the line, it's best to take the communication offline and call or email them instead.



# PART 3:

# MANAGING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION



If you read enough online reviews, you'll notice a pattern. When it comes to negative reviews -- in which the lowest rating is one star -- there are typically a number of them that begin with: *"I'd give zero stars if I could."*

Consumers check review sites before making relatively minor purchases. Now imagine you're looking to spend thousands of dollars, move all your belongings, your family, your pets and your entire life to an apartment community. If you see a few "zero star" reviews, would you still sign the lease? Probably not.

 **86%**  
of Consumers Check Online  
Reviews for Local Businesses



Online reviews carry more weight than ever before. The most recent local consumer review survey conducted by BrightLocal found that 86% of consumers (including 95% of people ages 18-34) check online reviews for local businesses today.

The increasing importance of online reviews means apartment reputation management is crucial. An efficient strategy for addressing negative reviews can help to ease some of their impact, and it can also reinforce the favorable impression of positive reviews.

Google, Facebook, and Yelp dominate the online review space, but you should also pay attention to multifamily-specific sites like Apartment Ratings, Apartments.com, and Apartment Guide.

## THE FIRST STEP WHEN USING ANY REVIEW SITE IS TO SET UP YOUR PAGE:

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**Claim your listing.** People can still leave reviews even if you haven't yet claimed your listing, but claiming it allows you to respond to the reviews.

**Add your business information.** Make sure you let prospective residents have your location, leasing office hours, phone number, and website.

**Include photos.** Upload high-quality photos of your community that show prospects what they can expect if they decide to live there. Include shots of the outside of your community, your best amenities and interior shots of your apartments.

## MONITORING AND PROTECTING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION

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Once you claim your page, you should start receiving notifications whenever a user leaves you a review. However, it's also a good idea to watch for mentions of your apartment community on blogs, forums, news sites, and the wider web. One of the most basic ways to watch for mentions of your property online is to set up a [Google Alert](#).

Mentions are delivered to your inbox in real time, or you can choose to receive your mentions once per day or once per week. If you're in close competition with other apartment communities, it's smart to also create alerts for them, too.

Google Alerts don't cover social media, so it's important to also use a social media management tool in addition to Alerts. There are many platforms, like Hootsuite, that allow you to find and filter social conversations on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Foursquare.





## RESPONDING TO REVIEWS

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Stay on top of your reviews and try to respond to each one within 24 hours. Look at negative reviews as opportunities to improve, and respond in a measured, professional tone. Negative or mixed reviews can be tempered if the responses to them are kind and helpful. Don't forget to also reply to positive reviews with messages of gratitude.



Try to respond to each  
review within  
**24 hours**



While having a list of templates to use instead of writing a unique response for each apartment review might sound like a smart way to save time, do so carefully. Renters can see through this repetitive and one-size-fits-all approach to apartment online reputation management, and it can make you look like you really don't care.

## HERE ARE SIX TIPS TO GET BEYOND THOSE CANNED RESPONSES:

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### **Acknowledge specific details.**

Use the review to help you come up with the response. Echo back some of what the reviewer wrote as a way to acknowledge their particular points. For example, if it mentions that they love the community events that are held every month, remind them about the next one, and ask for suggestions about future events.

### **Avoid ambiguous language.**

Complaints should be met with empathy and solutions, not marketing lingo. A resident took the time to write a review of your apartment community, so they should get a real response in return that seeks to resolve the resident's concern rather than a pre-written reply that just sort of fits.

### **Keep it professional.**

Emojis, words in all caps, and an overuse of exclamation points might turn people off. While it's important to express gratitude for your positive apartment reviews, you should do so in a poised manner.

### **Include contact information.**

It's especially crucial to include a phone number and/or email address in responses to negative apartment reviews, but it's a good idea to do so when replying to positive reviews, too. It shows that you value the resident's time and want to make it easy for them to reach you directly.

### **Remember that you're a human being communicating with another human being.**

Make your reply conversational, helpful, friendly, and how humans talk. Nothing will turn off reviewers and prospective renters more than robotic verbiage. Even worse is the same robotic verbiage repeated over and over across multiple reviews.

### **Put yourself in the reviewer's shoes.**

If you're intimidated by the idea of responding to apartment reviews without a list of possible replies in front of you, just try to be authentic and imagine what kind of reply you would like to receive if you wrote the review. It's okay if it lacks polish as long as it makes the reviewer feel heard.

# PART 4:

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVERTISE YOUR COMMUNITY



Not only can social media be an effective way to reach prospective residents organically, it can also be a very effective tool for advertising.

## ADVERTISING ON FACEBOOK

Facebook has two advertising options: boosting posts and creating Facebook ads.

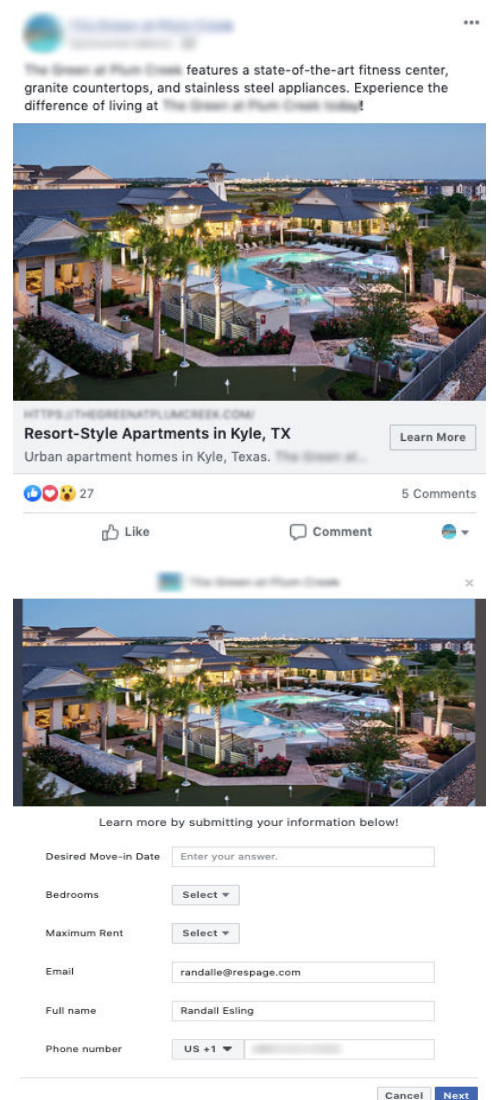
### BOOSTED POSTS

This is the simplest way to advertise on Facebook. A boosted post is a post to your timeline that you can put money toward to increase the number of people who see it. When you boost a post, it appears on your followers' news feed as an ad and it will be labeled as "sponsored." Boosting a post is easy to do and it allows you to reach a wider, targeted audience.

A big bonus is that it gives you access to your analytics through Facebook Insights so you can track the performance of your posts. It shows the reach of each post, along with how many clicks it received as well as comments, reactions, and shares.

When you boost a post, you will decide:

- Your audience.** You can set the parameters for who will see your boosted post, including their age, gender, location, and interests.
- Your budget.** Control how much you spend to boost your post. The minimum budget is \$1 per day, but keep in mind that the more you pay, the more people you will reach.
- The duration.** Run your boosted post for a fixed length of time, like a day or a week, or until you turn it off manually.








## FACEBOOK ADS

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While boosting posts is considered advertising, creating ads within Facebook's Ads Manager gives you more customization options. The ads can appear in users' news feeds on mobile and desktop or in the right hand column on desktop.

### WHEN SETTING UP A FACEBOOK AD, YOU WILL DECIDE:

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-  **Your objective.** Answer the question, "What is the outcome I want from this ad?" It could be an increased number of signed leases or tours, or increased brand awareness.
-  **Your audience.** Who do you want to see your ad? Designate the interests that best represent who you're trying to reach.
-  **Where to run your ad.** You can select Facebook, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Facebook Audience Network, or all of the above. (Choosing the Facebook Audience Network means your ads will appear on mobile apps and other sites around the web in addition to Facebook, using the same targeting data.)
-  **Your budget.** Set a limit on how much you're willing to spend either per day or for the entire lifetime of your ad. Designating a spending limit means you won't be asked to pay more than that.
-  **Your format.** There are six ad formats designed to work on every device and connection speed. You can choose to show a single image or video in your ad, or opt for a multi-image format.

Once your ad is live, you can monitor its performance and edit your ad in Ads Manager. If you have more than one version of your ad, you can see which one is more effective and make adjustments as needed.

## Boosted posts vs. ads: Which should you choose?

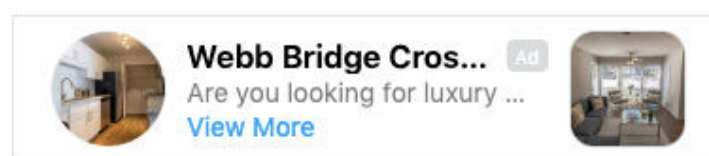
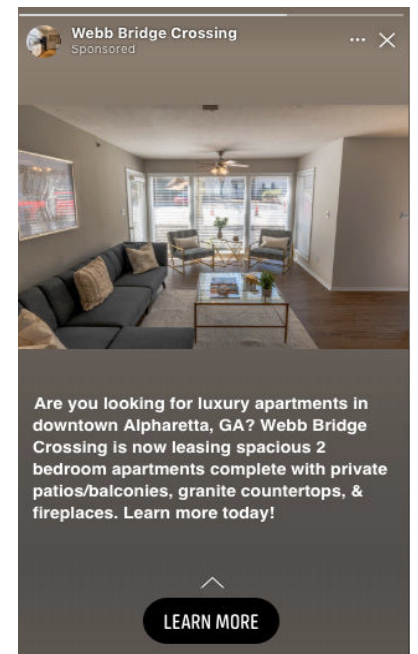
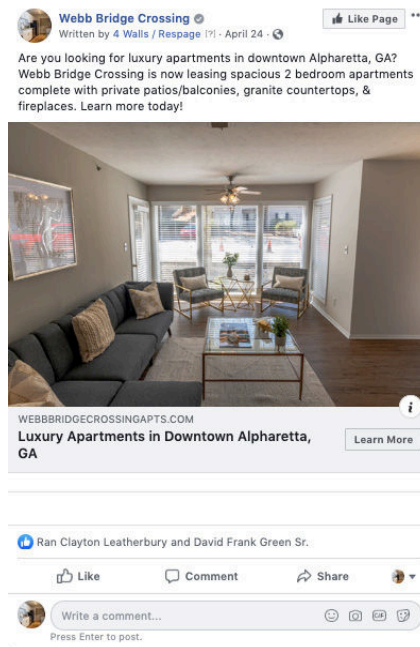
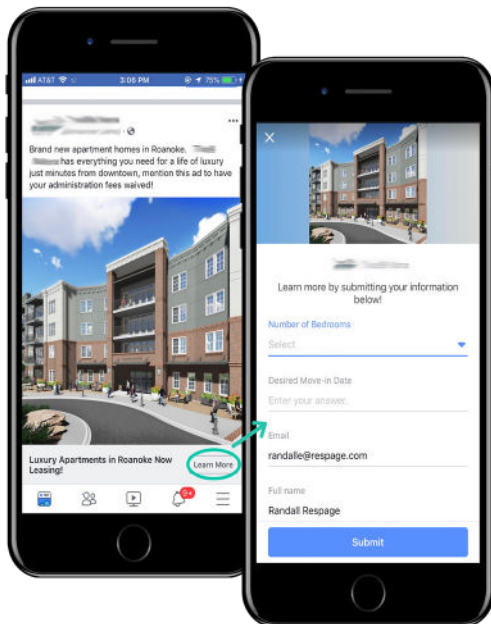
### Boosted posts

Boosted posts are generally designed to promote one-off posts and are a great way to spread the word about events and announcements.

### Ads

Ads are ideal for ongoing ad campaigns. They offer more sophisticated targeting and customization that can help you pinpoint your ideal audience who are most likely to be interested in your apartment community.

The two options differ in terms of targeting, format, goals, and cost.



## ADVERTISING ON INSTAGRAM

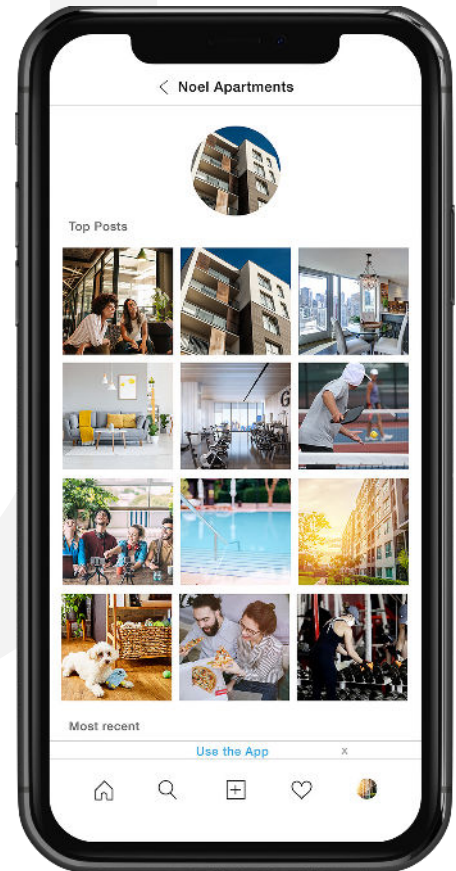
There are two ways to create an Instagram ad: through Facebook Ads Messenger or through Instagram directly.

### BOOSTED POSTS

Facebook Ads Manager allows you to create ads that run on both Facebook and Instagram. After linking your Instagram account to your Facebook page, you will be walked through the same process as Facebook ads and will be asked to designate your objectives, your audience, your placements (where your ads will appear on Facebook and Instagram), your budget, and when your ads will run.

### HOW TO ADVERTISE ON INSTAGRAM DIRECTLY

Much like Facebook's boosted posts, Instagram allows you to promote an existing post. It's an ideal way for you to get even more attention for posts that are performing well and seeing a decent amount of engagement.



# HERE'S HOW TO DO IT:

- Go to the post you want to promote and click the blue *Promote* button.
- Set your goals (drive more users to your website or maximize the number of users who see your post).
- You can have Instagram choose a default audience for your ad, or you can create a special audience by choosing interests, location, and demographics.

## ADVERTISING ON TWITTER

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**Twitter has two advertising options:** You can either promote your tweets and your account, or you can launch a Twitter Ads campaign.

### TWITTER PROMOTE MODE

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As with Facebook's boosted posts and Instagram's promoted posts, Twitter Promote Mode allows you to get a larger audience for your individual tweets. Each day, your first 10 tweets that meet certain quality requirements are added to a Promoted Tweets campaign that targets your selected audience. You can choose between two broad targeting categories, location and interests. These Promoted Tweets become ads that appear with a small *Promoted* label.

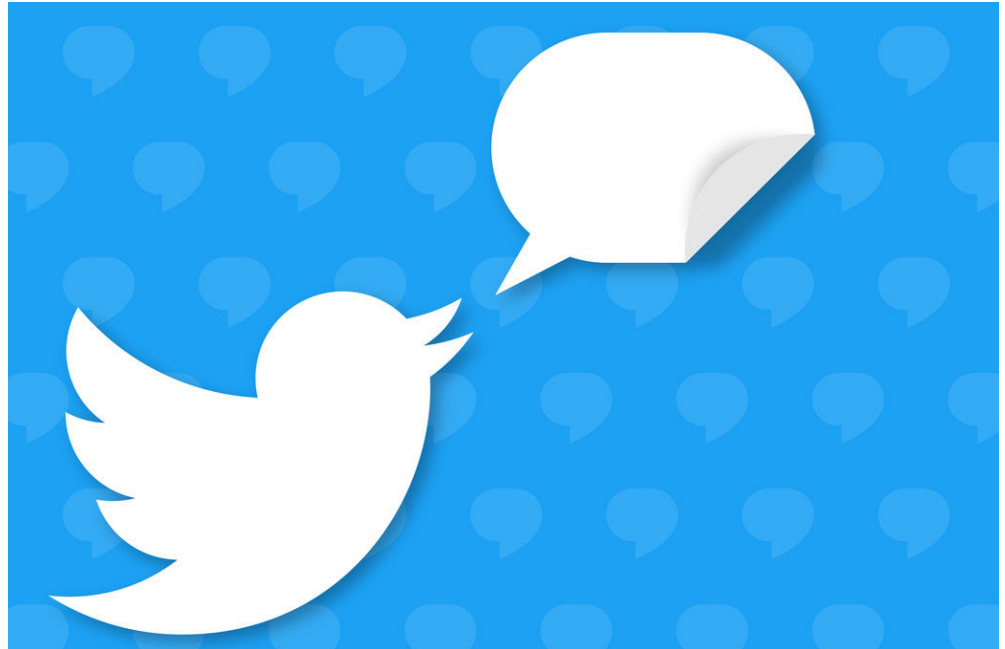


You'll have access to insights that will help you evaluate the performance of each tweet, including the number of people reached, followers gained, and profile visits. Unlike the other platforms, which let you decide how much you're willing to pay, Twitter Promote Mode costs \$99 per month.



## TWITTER ADS

This is a more comprehensive platform that permits you to define each element of your community's ads. Before launching a Twitter Ad campaign, you must determine your objective. It gives you several options, including followers, website clicks or conversions, or brand awareness. From there, you'll be taken to a page where you can name your campaign, add a start and end date, and set a budget.



The platform allows you to set an audience for each ad, including gender, age, location and device. You also have the option of targeting by keyword so that your ad shows for people who searched for or tweeted the keyword.

### Promote Mode vs. Twitter Ads: *Which should you choose?*

#### Promote Mode

If you're looking to get more eyeballs on your website, promoted tweets might be the correct route. Keep in mind that it only makes sense to take this route if you tweet often, multiple times per day.

#### Twitter Ads

If you're looking to grow your follower base, ads offer more power in terms of targeting, so this would be the best choice to reach that goal.

# PART 5:






## LEVERAGING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA DURING COVID-19



Since the COVID-19 outbreak, social media platforms have become a primary source of information for millions around the globe. Not only are people looking to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to connect with friends and family, they're also using these platforms to stay up to date on happenings in and around their apartment community and the world.

*Now is not the time to return to your pre-COVID approach to Facebook and other platforms. Instead, embrace social media as a tool to share important information as well as connect emotionally with your residents and prospects.*

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

-  **Put your sales tactics on pause.** If your normal apartment marketing messaging reflected urgency, such as asking prospects to come in and sign a lease as soon as possible, consider toning it down or expanding the window for any special deals.
-  **Create a FAQ sheet and share it.** This is an easy and effective way to summarize all you're doing to keep residents, visitors, and employees safe. Whether you post the entire thing in a Facebook post or link to it, a FAQ can be effective in keeping everyone informed and showing you care. Update your FAQ as needed and share these changes, too.
-  **Meet prospects where they are.** Leverage this uptick in social media usage by doing virtual tours on Facebook Live and Instagram Live. Take the opportunity to touch upon everything the apartment community is doing to keep residents, prospects, and employees safe.
-  **Be transparent.** Local and state guidelines on reopening vary from place to place and they're subject to change. Keep your residents and prospects in the loop by announcing on social media how your apartment community is responding. If you are taking a more conservative approach while your wider community is easing restrictions, make sure this is clear.
-  **Don't be 100% serious all the time.** Many people are craving entertainment in their feeds, so feel free to be lighthearted with some of the content you share on social media. Keep in mind that many people are under unprecedented amounts of stress, though, so don't overdo it or your efforts may come across as tone-deaf.



**Create a Virtual Community.** Let your residents know that your community believes in physical distancing, not social distancing. Use your apartment social media platforms to promote activities meant to bring people together emotionally.

- **TikTok:** Have contests around popular challenges or trending dances.
- **Facebook Live or Instagram Live:** Create a book club or do a cocktail demo and tasting; have a cute pet photo contest; hold a virtual talent show broadcast over social media.
- **Facebook:** Create a private apartment community Facebook group just for residents and staff to share announcements and other information not meant for public viewing. A component of that could be a Buy Nothing group just centered around your community. Residents can post items they're giving away or are in need of, which can make neighbors feel more connected.



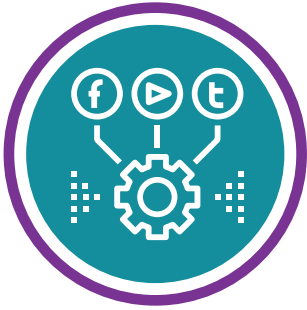
**Try Gamification.** A notable trend in Multifamily over the past year is gamification, in which residents can earn virtual points for doing things that support the community and help to make things run more smoothly. The idea is to assign point values to actions that you want residents to take, like making a referral, posting an apartment review, or creating a social media post about the community. You could also offer points for paying rent online, submitting a service request through the resident portal and other activities that you want to encourage. The virtual points can be used to claim prizes, such as gift cards.



## KEEPING YOUR PROFILES UPDATED

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*Social media profiles are easier to update than a website, and increasingly, it's where prospects will turn to when seeking the most up-to-date information on your community. Here are the most important things that potential residents of your community will want to know:*



**Hours of operation.** Display your updated hours on your Instagram bio and in your Facebook profile. If you want to discourage walk-ins, make sure that you include contact information so prospects can make an appointment.

**Safety measures.** Prospects may be hesitant to visit your community without knowing what kinds of health and safety precautions are in place. If you're requiring a mask and social distancing, make that clear, and also emphasize that your team members will be following the same masking and distancing rules.

**New tour procedures.** Some apartment communities are continuing to do virtual tours while some are offering self-guided ones. Others have resumed regular tours, but require masks and distancing. Ensure that prospects know what to expect by putting updated tour information in your Instagram bio and Facebook profile.

**Reinforce your messaging.** In addition to putting all of the pertinent details in your social media profiles, it's also a good idea to create posts reflecting the same information to make sure people see it.

# CONCLUSION

It's clear that in order to stay competitive, apartment communities need to have a robust social media strategy. While this guide can serve as a good roadmap for success in social media, **Respage can help you optimize your social media strategy and achieve your goals.**

**Contact Respage to learn more.**

