8 DO'S & DON'TS

for property marketing websites

Make sure you're attracting
and converting leads
– instead of scaring them away!

> Almost **80% of today's renters** visit a property management company or community website during their home search.[1] But **if your website doesn't have the information** they're looking for, they won't waste their time looking at it - **they'll just move on** to the next search result.

1 Source: 2017 NMHC/Kingsley Renter Preferences Report

Getting started

Ready to attract more prospects to your property marketing websites? Discover what it takes to win the attention of today's renters and convert them into residents.

First, learn more about:

- Digital curb appeal...
- Online renter behavior...

Then, see how to optimize your three most-visited detail pages:

- Do's & don'ts for floor plans...
- Do's & don'ts for gallery pages...
- Do's & don'ts for amenities...

Digital curb appeal

What do you think when you drive by a property with overgrown landscaping, broken windows and trash out front? Do you want to live there? Of course not.

Bad curb appeal is a sign of unprofessional property management. It can scare away prospects who come by to apply or tour in person.

Digital curb appeal works the same way for online renters.

Their first impression of your community is usually your website. If your property marketing website has bad photos, poor functionality and broken links, do you think they will want to take the next step? Or will they bounce and check out a competitor with better digital curb appeal?

Online renter behavior

Today's online buyers have more options and broader market visibility than ever before. They expect a good user experience from any brand they choose to do business with. This is especially important for big purchases, like buying a new TV or (you guessed it) renting an apartment.

Let's take a look at some interesting renter stats...

WHERE ARE RENTERS SEARCHING?

79% visited a community's website

40% visited a community's social media channels

63% signed a lease electronically

HOW ARE RENTERS SEARCHING?

89% used a desktop

83% used a smartphone

44% used a tablet

Source: 2017 NMHC/Kingsley Renter Preferences Report

Your website's MVPs (most visited pages)

Many property management businesses use **RENTCafé** to manage their corporate and property marketing websites. In fact, we are the largest provider of property marketing websites in the country. There are more than 25,000 RENTCafé websites live right now.

When we aggregate data for all RENTCafé websites, we can see which pages receive the most visits from prospects.

After the homepage, the three most visited property pages are:

1. **Floor plans**
2. **Gallery**
3. **Amenities**

Chances are, your reports show a similar trend, so we're going to show you how you can maximize the content on those three pages of your websites to make the biggest impact.

#1
Floor plan options

Do show multiple options for a single plan.

Don't leave them guessing.

Many communities display only one image per floor plan, but a great way to maximize content and prospect interaction on your floor plan page is to provide multiple floor plan images, such as 2D and 3D layouts as well as actual photos. RENT*Café* allows you to add as many images as you want.

TIPS & TRICKS WITH PAUL YOUNT:
"Go one step further and provide the 3D walk-through tours. It will show prospects what it's like to live there and keep them engaged with your website. Double win!"

#2 Floor plan information

Do give site visitors the information they need to take the next step.

Don't let a bad user experience cost you leases.

Make sure visitors can find the details they need on your floor plans page to keep them moving forward. When a prospect clicks to see the availability of a floor plan, what happens next? How do you help them identify which unit meets their needs?

More information means a more educated customer who's comfortable completing the transaction online instead of taking onsite resources to convert...
or bouncing to a competitor's site!

TIPS & TRICKS WITH ESTHER BONARDI:
"Did you know that the floor plans page is the most effective place to use nudge marketing? Our experience shows that the most successful strategy is to pop up a nudge after your prospect has spent at least **10 seconds** engaged on this page. Use this as an opportunity to capture lead information, introduce a property special or simply go for it and ask for the tour!"

How do you use nudge marketing to convert more leads?

"We use nudge marketing to convert leads in a variety of ways. You should keep your nudge messages short and sweet and on brand. And don't let them run for too long. Keep the content, messaging and goals fresh."

– Brenda Studt, VP of Marketing,
The Excelsior Group

Watch video

How do you use nudge marketing to convert more leads?

"We will often use nudge marketing to put a concession message on the floor plans page because we already know that those prospects are engaged. They may just need a slight push, and then we're more likely to get a highly qualified lead. A recent nudge campaign from one of our floor plan pages contributed to 20% of the leads from that site."

– Shelly Steitz, Marketing Manager,
The Excelsior Group

Watch video

#3
Photo quality

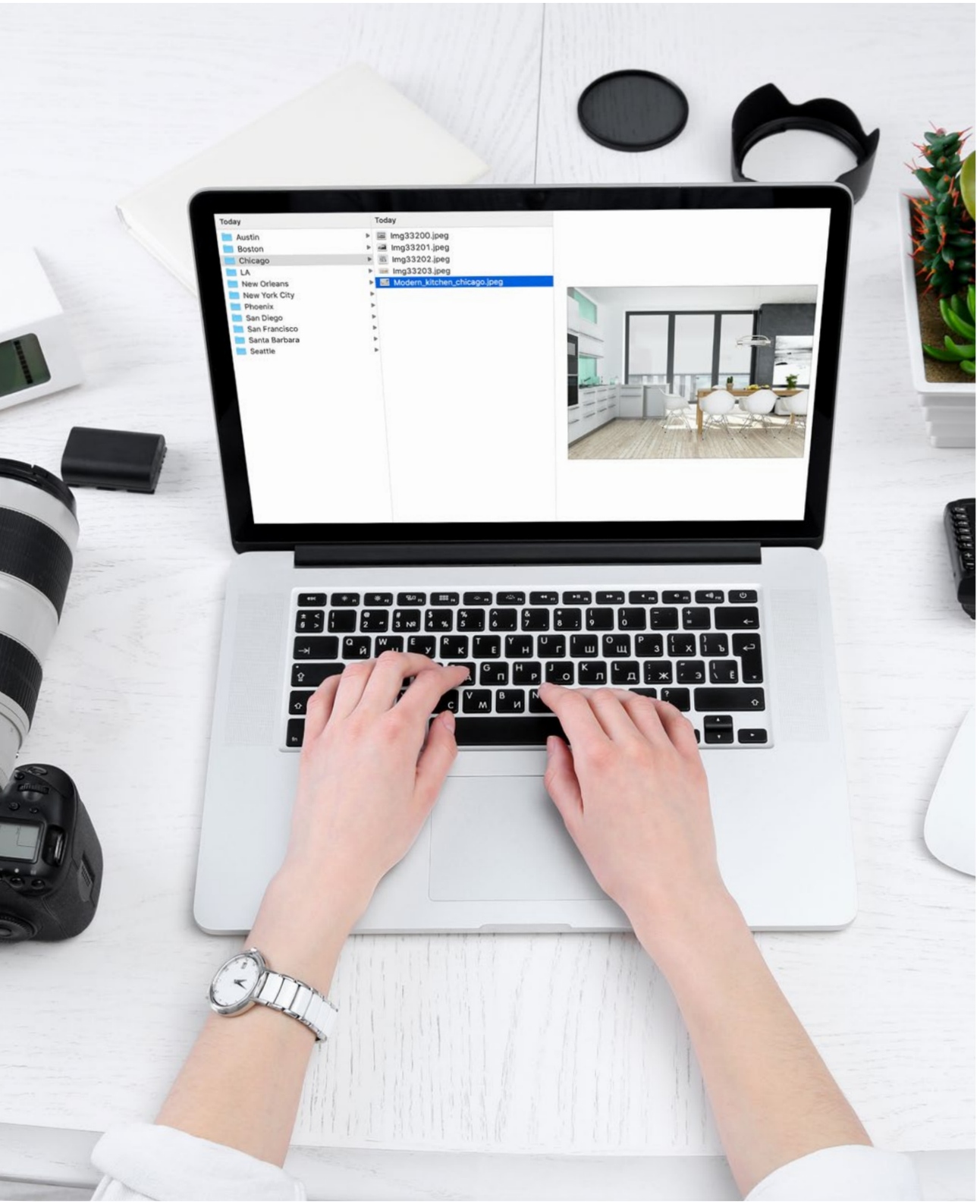
Do invest in good photography.

Don't try to DIY, unless you're a pro.

The best way to optimize your photo page is to have many high-quality photos for prospects to look through. Images should be high resolution, brightly lit and not blurry. Showcase kitchens, community spaces and special fixtures, appliances or finishes. Include photos of your happy onsite team. Don't waste time with photos of bare walls or anything that is hard to understand out of context.

TIPS & TRICKS WITH CATRIONA OROSCO:
"Being a Google Premier Partner, Yardi has the inside scoop on what's available in the Google universe. Search 'Google Trusted Photographers' to find professionals in your area that know exactly what Google does and doesn't want to see. They will upload your images to all Google assets like Google Maps, Google My Business etc."

PREMIER Google Partner



Source: Think With Google

#4
Photo description

Do be strategic about the copy surrounding your photos.

Don't think that a picture is worth a thousand words... and skip words altogether!

After you upload your photos, always add descriptions. Pairing good captions with your gallery photos further creates a sense of place as your potential renters browse through them. There's an SEO benefit here too because captions add context for search engines as well.

TIPS & TRICKS WITH PAUL YOUNT: "Did you know that more than **20%** of the population has some kind of disability? There are many things that you can – and should – be doing to optimize for accessibility. Editing photo filenames is a step in the right direction! 'Dog park at Anyplace Apartments Chicago' tells search engines a lot more than 'Img33201.jpg.' Alt image text should be accurate, concise and include no redundant language.

#5
Photo sharing

Do share your images on social media to boost traffic.

Don't keep your property a secret.

You paid for great images, right? Get them up on Instagram! In fact, it only makes sense to share them in as many places as possible – especially since today's renters interact with brands on more platforms than ever before. Post your photos on your social channels, then invite your audience to view more images with a link back to your gallery page.

TIPS & TRICKS WITH ESTHER BONARDI:
"You can instantly upload all your Instagram photos to your website with RENTCafé. It's a simple way to add more engaging photos to your website without creating extra work for anyone. With the rise of influencer marketing, shouldn't you be making the most of those memorable moments and images?"

#6
Amenity differentiators

Do identify unique selling points.

Don't mimic the nearest competitor.

If you list the same amenities as your competitor, what makes your property stand out? Identify unique selling points you have that they don't. Maybe you're on a great bus route, have free pet treats in the lobby or have a hilarious maintenance tech. List it! Better yet, make it stand out by adding a "featured amenity" icon.

TIPS & TRICKS WITH PAUL YOUNT:
"Claim neighborhood hot spots like extended amenities. Close to a great park? Designer or outlet shopping nearby? Add it and link it. Even communities with few onsite perks can look fantastic when you think beyond your borders and tell the neighborhood story on your amenities page."

#7
Amenity photos

Do add photos to every amenity.

Don't miss your chance to show off.

We said it before and we'll say it again: add pictures, pictures and more pictures! There is a huge difference between reading the word "pool" and seeing a high-quality image of a sparkling pool on a sunny day. Use your amenity photos to create wish-you-were-here moments that make prospects want to move in asap.

TIPS &TRICKS WITH CATRIONA OROSCO: "Did you know that roughly **60% of searches** are mobile*? That means a lot of web visitors are viewing your site on their phones. Be sure to include vertical photos as well as horizontal ones to give them a better viewing experience."

*2018 IAB Internet Advertising Revenue Report

#8 Amenities

Do include descriptions of each amenity.

Don't shortchange your SEO.

Be sure you add short but sweet descriptions to all your amenities. For instance, if you have a fitness center, you should describe exactly what equipment is in there. If you're telling people that you're on the bus line, add a link to the city bus schedule. Amenity descriptions create helpful content for both prospects and search engines.

TIPS & TRICKS WITH ESTHER BONARDI:

"Use engaging language to describe amenities. For instance, instead of saying resort style pool, how about poolside hangout? Instead of a gourmet kitchen, how about a chef's dream kitchen?"

All done! Now what?

Think you're all done now that you've tackled these eight do's and don'ts? Think again!

Now that these three pages are optimized, your property marketing website is ready for an influx of visitors. **But how will you get them there?**

Reach more prospects with a cohesive marketing strategy for your website that includes these five things...

1. **SEO: Win more clicks in local search results.**
2. **PPC: Deliver relevant ad content that gets clicks.**
3. **Social media: Increase brand awareness and drive engagement.**
4. **Reputation management: Take control of your digital reputation.**
5. **ILS listings: Cast a wider net with premium listing exposure.**

You can manage all these things yourself (and possibly hire a new person or two). Or you can get expert help and transparent result reporting with a full-service search engine marketing solution like **RENTCafé Reach**.

How do you optimize search engine marketing?

"You need a service like RENTCafé Reach that shares traffic reports and analyzes data with you. After three strong years of consecutive growth, our organic sessions were up another 21% last year."

– Melise Balastrieri, VP of Marketing & Development, MG Properties Group

Watch video

Thanks for reading!

When you're ready to learn more about property marketing websites and tools designed specifically for multifamily, **join a webinar**, **email us** or **call 800.866.1144**. We'd love to chat about on-page and off-page optimization, user experience and all things data related.

Want more tips and tricks for property marketers? Follow us on social media:

YARDI | Energized for Tomorrow

Yardi.com