



HOW WELL DO YOU TREAT YOUR TENANTS?

As the age old saying goes, “Treat others as you would like to be treated”. It is simple enough and easy enough to put into practice, yet, in the world of renting, this isn’t always the culture emanating from our property management departments towards our tenants. Tracey Bulmer explains why this needs to change.

The importance of having a rent roll and a successful property management department has certainly evolved over the years to a point now where it has moved from the poor cousin in the back corner of the office to a front runner producing income and a great asset to have when the sales market is tough.

As the age old saying goes, “Treat others as you would like to be treated”. It is simple enough and easy enough to put into practice, yet, in the world of renting, this isn’t always the culture emanating from our property management departments towards our tenants. This isn’t the case with every office but there is definitely more work needed in this area and educating staff and taking them aware is obviously the first step.

Having worked in the industry for a number of years and being a homeowner, it was only when I relocated interstate and decided to rent first before buying, I experienced first-hand how it felt to be treated as a tenant. I was shocked and it really made me wonder if I was guilty of the same practices.

On entering one office and enquiring about rentals, the receptionist did not even lift her head and acknowledge me, but merely pointed where the rent list stand was. Another agency had a bright, happy and enthusiastic salesman greet me at the door and as soon as I advised I was looking for a rental, he had turned and walked off before I could even finish my sentence. I then had agents not turn up for booked appointments only to be told when I phoned in to the office to see where the agent was, that an application had been approved that the morning and they were no longer going to hold the inspection.

Old school training has always focused on giving us advice on how to give our landlords A1 service and meet all their needs and expectations over and beyond, which I by no means disagree with, but what about your tenants? Are your tenants being given the same service and if they aren’t, why not?

Have you stopped and considered who are renting your properties? Not every tenant has to rent due to his or her financial circumstances, there are many people who simply choose to rent, so they

can choose their lifestyle. For example, people don’t want to be tied down to heavy mortgages with a house in suburbia, if they can pay the same in rent and live by the beach or the golf course. They choose to rent to create the lifestyle they want.

Economics aside though, your tenants’ word of mouth is just as important as your landlords when it comes to being an advocate for your business. So why not add value to your business, by adding value to your tenants experience when they are renting through you? What do you have to lose?

It’s time to take stock and make sure that your staff are aware that tenants are not only people whom deserve the same

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respect as any other client on your books but they too can be the greatest resource for promoting your agency and perhaps your next client in your sales division.

From the initial encounter with your tenant, throughout their tenancy and right up to their vacate, it is important to ensure that they are given the same level of service as other clients. The simple things are a given, that is – turning up on time for an appointment, returning phone calls on the same day, promptly actioning issues – if you do these for your landlord, why not do it for your tenant?

But further to this, are you informing them of updated legislation as it occurs? Sending them a Christmas card? Touching base with them to see how things are going with the property? We certainly do this for our landlords.

Think about how you can add value to your tenants and you will add value to your business.

Building a professional relationship with the tenant can also remove those ‘ill preconceptions’ that many tenants have about property managers. There is nothing worse than meeting a tenant who has just come from another appointment where

they found the property manager to be rude, unhelpful, or not interested in what they had to say. They often then project that on to you thinking you are the same. Or there are the notions that Property Managers are always “out to get the bond”, or “always on the owners side”.

The only way to start shifting these attitudes is to change the culture and our practices.

So why not start rewarding your tenants for paying rent on time, acknowledge when they have presented the property clean & tidy at routine inspections and let them know they are just as important as any other client in the functioning of the business. Without tenants, we don’t have income producing properties.

Great relationships with any client can lead to great things. Having a rent roll of clients right at your fingertips gives you the added advantage to ensure that they not only know how good your service is but they only need to tell one person – and this could lead to more business without you even having to do anything but doing your job well.

As things are getting tougher, it might be

time to stop and reflect at the service your tenants are receiving and the respect they are being given. There are always ways to improve your department and this could be one of them. It is also important to ensure that all other departments in your office (like sales, finance, and others) are on-board as they can benefit as well.

Giving tenants a great experience when renting, is no different to giving purchasers a great experience when they are buying. There should be no discrimination against who walks through your agency doors, or no preferential treatment when it comes to being a landlord or a tenant. They are all clients of the business, and you should never underestimate what they can do for your business.



Tracey Bulmer is the Principal and Property Manager of One Choice Realty located on the beautiful Gold Coast. Her passion for property

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