

## JPI Case Study:

### Customer Service Measurement Provides Valuable Insight into Prospect Satisfaction and Sales Process

JPI Management Services (JPI) is a national multifamily real estate firm managing a portfolio of 130 properties in the affordable, market rate and student housing market place. In May 2007, the company retained J Turner Research, a third-party research firm specializing in the multifamily industry, to initiate a systematic and ongoing survey program to measure how its prospective residents perceived the leasing process at 25 communities. JPI's objective was to gain a more accurate understanding of its customer service strengths and weaknesses. Using this information the company can adjust operations, staffing, training and marketing in order to improve the perceived level of service at each property and directly effect occupancy, retention and profitability.

Historically JPI utilized mystery shopping to measure satisfaction levels of prospect residents and the sales process at each community. Although these surveys provided some insightful data, it lacked the timely, consistent and unbiased feedback the executive team was looking for from its core audience. The company ultimately sought a database of feedback to identify customer service trends, establish portfolio-wide benchmarks and assess staff performance.

J Turner Research was engaged to implement a targeted survey program capable of meeting each of JPI's individual objectives. Using innovative technology driven research tools, J Turner Research set out to define customer satisfaction levels at a portion of JPI's multifamily communities. To determine the program's effectiveness, J Turner implemented the service at 25 of JPI's market rate communities nationally as a test group. The results of each community's surveys would be used to identify strengths, weaknesses and trends related to its leasing process.

To gather this information and provide JPI with real-time updates, J Turner Research implemented its PulseTracker survey tool to collect information from each prospective resident who visited any of the properties in the test group. At the time of a prospect's initial visit to a community, the leasing agent collected an e-mail address which was added to JPI's property's database. Approximately 85 percent of prospects provided an e-mail address. J Turner Research downloaded new prospect e-mail addresses daily in order to distribute a Web-enabled e-mail survey to prospects and gather their responses. The

survey questions focus on a variety of topics including interaction with staff, overall appearance of the community, competitive comparisons, perceived value and the motivating factors affecting their decision to lease.

J Turner Research then developed and provided JPI with a rolling index of each respondent's feedback using daily, monthly and annual reports. These reports provided the executive team an opportunity to assess both short term and long term trends based on uniform and comparable survey data. The results from each community was shared with the director of community operations, leasing associates, and other properties in the portfolio to establish leasing benchmarks and best practices, as well as to identify those leasing professionals, communities and regions delivering exceptional customer service. The intelligence from high -scoring communities is used to establish best practices and make corrections at low-ranking properties in order to improve operations, marketing tactics, training, etc.

JPI also utilizes the survey results to evaluate internal performance parameters that drive onsite staff compensation and recognition. Using prospective resident feedback enables JPI to assess each staff member using a fair and equitable model. Individuals can be rewarded and recognized for superior onsite performance. The monthly evaluations have boosted performance and motivated employees to achieve their monthly goals, while simultaneously improving retention of the highest performing staff members.

"JPI has a fundamental belief that a prospect's perceptions and satisfaction directly corresponds to positive financial results," said JoAnn Blaylock, president of JPI Management Services. "Therefore, having access to actual customer satisfaction feedback on a regular and timely basis allowed us to refine our processes and procedures to better deliver the level of service our prospects expected. Additionally, the survey program enabled us to measure and deliver the best customer service improving overall satisfaction and our portfolio's profitability."

Based on the success of the test group program, JPI is expanding the customer service measurement program with J Turner Research to include prospect and resident surveys at all but a few of its communities totaling approximately 43,000 units. This expanded service, PulseTracker Plus provided by J Turner Research, measures current resident satisfaction including value for money, willingness to refer a friend and level of brand loyalty in addition to prospect opinions obtained through PulseTracker.