

## Tour Guide Playbook

Today's prospective residents are opting for virtual leasing options more and more often, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. To keep up with demand, promote a sense of safety, and instill confidence in prospects and residents alike, use these virtual leasing tactics.

### The Game Plan

First thing's first, you need to take stock of your options and establish your plan of attack. There are lots of different ways to do virtual leasing, but your choices should take several factors into account, including your budget, your staff availability, and your market trends. Ask yourself a few questions:

#### What staff is available during this period?

How many staff members are available at the office and how many are working remotely? Your staff availability will help determine which types of tours you offer, how you support current residents, and how you handle move-ins.

#### What technology is currently available and what budget is available for additional tech?

For example, can you add a chatbot to your website? Can you pay to create virtual tours through a service like Matterport?

#### What are the current market trends?

What are competitors offering and what do prospects expect? With respect to COVID-19, are there local guidelines in place that should be followed? If your residents are students, is the local university sharing any COVID timelines or plans?

#### Where are you highlighting your process and regulations for the public?

It's important to be transparent about your processes so that prospects and residents alike know what to expect and how they can get it touch. Consider posting messaging about your tours, leasing office hours, etc. on your website Google My Business page. We also recommend sharing that information with current residents via email and text messages.)

### The Tour

There are a variety of ways to offer safe and convenient tours in the era of COVID (and beyond). The following options each have their own pros and cons for staff and prospects.

#### Fully Virtual

The safest and often most convenient option is to offer tours that are 100% virtual.

This option requires some up front cost and/or staff time to create the virtual tour resource (whether through a service like Matterport or by recording a video walkthrough of a unit). You'll also want to ensure that you have up-to-date, high-quality photography on your website to supplement the tour.

Once these resources have been created, however, the result is a virtual tour experience that is convenient and safe for staff and prospects alike.

## Tele-Conferencing Tours

For a human touch that preserves the no-contact element of virtual tours, tele-conferencing may be a great option. In this case, you'd have a staff member enter the tour unit while on a video call with the prospect so that prospects can interact with the leasing agent in real time, asking any questions that come up.

This option also allows your leasing staff to work their magic to seal the deal by providing a positive human touch and making the prospect feel welcomed and valued.

## Private In-Person Tours By Appointment

Offering in-person tours safely during the age of COVID requires additional processes and regulations, but it is achievable.

Scheduling in-person tours with a single prospect (or a single household of prospects) allows you to deliver the in-person experience while limiting in-person contact to small groups and giving staff the time they need to clean the tour unit between separate tour appointments.

The primary downsides to this option are the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the need to devote extra staff time to disinfecting the tour unit between tours.

## Self-Guided Tours

Self-guided tours can be a great option for prospects who want the in-person experience but value a no-contact approach and the extra safety it provides. To offer self-guided tours, you'll need a lockbox or similar tool that allows prospects (and only prospects) to enter the unit at their designated tour time.

You'll still need to clean the tour unit between tours, but you'll reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the staff time required to conduct in-person tours.



## Signing the Lease

When it comes to signing the lease, online options have been available for years and now is the perfect time to take advantage of the tools available through common lease management softwares or options like DocuSign.

## Full Online Leasing Options

These days, the leading lease management softwares make it easy to allow your prospects to submit an application and sign a lease agreement 100% online. This option is not only easier for the prospect, but it can also be added automatically to your online databases housing resident information, making it easier to ensure their move-in and resident experience is as smooth as it should be.

## Real-Time Support

When you offer online leasing options, you don't have to give up on the option of real-time support for your new residents. Hopping on a video call or being available via chatbot can provide the support they need while they fill out the lease document. It also allows them to ask any questions they may have about next steps once the lease document is signed.



## After The Move-In

Don't neglect your new residents once they've moved in! Make sure they know about all your policies and procedures surrounding COVID-19 as soon as they've moved in. This may include special package delivery policies, amenities availability, leasing staff availability, maintenance request procedures, and more.

A comprehensive email is a great no-contact way to deliver this information to your new residents--consider including it as part of their new resident orientation kit, along with a signed copy of the lease document and other community rules and regulations.



## The Renewal

Keeping your current residents around for years to come requires that you show them a little extra love right now too.

Communicate clearly and regularly with your current residents about any updates to your amenities, office hours, and other rules and regulations. Send supportive messages and cultivate positive relationships between staff and residents. Doing so will foster the trust and confidence needed for residents to renew in a time where uncertainty and insecurity abound.

[CHECK OUT OUR DIGITAL MARKETING TIPS DURING COVID ▶](#)

