



Modern Marketing in Multifamily

How to attract, engage, and retain today's renters using smart digital marketing and lead management.



WELCOME

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Introduction

There are only so many hours in a day. Multifamily businesses that aren't actively looking for ways to increase efficiency and reduce lead response times — without sacrificing resident service — will struggle to stay competitive. Today's apartment seeker is more selective than ever. When they engage with a property, they expect a fast, personalized response. If that doesn't happen, they will simply move on to the next option.

In many leasing offices, prospect engagement remains largely manual. This often forces teams to choose between two critical priorities: filling units or delivering an excellent resident experience. But leasing success doesn't have to come at the expense of service. With the right tools in place, it's possible to achieve both.

To compete in this landscape, marketers need to focus on five key areas where efficiencies can be gained:

- **Keeping costs under control.** As the rental market grows more competitive, so does the bidding for keywords and local SEO ads. Cost-per-click is rising, making it essential for marketing teams to execute their strategies with precision.
- **Ensuring lead quality.** Maximizing ROI means identifying which leads have the highest likelihood of converting. This requires detailed prospect personas, robust CRM tracking, and lead attribution tools to understand which channels and messages are performing best. Without this insight, your marketing strategy is essentially flying blind.

- **Responding quickly.** Renters expect fast responses when they submit a question, request a tour, or complete an application. The longer the delay, the less likely the lead is to convert. Many leasing teams simply don't have the resources to maintain high-speed responses and high-touch communication at the same time.
- **Leveraging automation and AI.** Prospects interact with your property across multiple channels — from social media and Google to ILS platforms and your website. Without automation, managing those interactions is difficult. Yet many properties still haven't incorporated AI or automation into their marketing and leasing workflows.

- **Working within an all-in-one solution.** Siloed systems that don't communicate create roadblocks. Notifications aren't triggered, automations break down, and visibility across the funnel disappears. Without centralized tools, making data-informed decisions becomes much harder.

Properties that ignore these challenges will find themselves falling behind, even as digital marketing becomes the most essential driver of new leases. In this guide, we'll walk through how to cost-effectively generate leads, accelerate response times, manage your online reputation, and implement technology that supports your marketing goals.

SECTION I

How to Attract New Leads

The first step in building a successful digital marketing campaign is understanding your audience and segmenting them by renter type. Are you trying to reach students, young professionals, families, luxury renters, or budget-conscious renters? Each of these audiences has distinct needs, and your outreach strategy should reflect that.

For example, students are more likely to engage with social media and short-form video content, such as TikTok. They are often interested in roommate-friendly layouts and proximity to campus. Families prioritize schools, parks, and square footage. Luxury renters look for premium amenities and the exclusivity of the community. Beyond the platforms you choose, your messaging should also align with each group's motivations — whether that's convenience, lifestyle, or affordability.

Best practice: Use business intelligence and predictive analytics to identify which prospect types are most likely to convert — and which are likely to convert fastest — so your team can prioritize the right leads.



Segmentation turns guesswork into strategy, and strategy into signed leases.

Optimize Local Search and ILS

Regardless of audience, one of the most critical digital marketing priorities is optimizing for local search and ILS platforms. According to the 2025 Entrata Resident Report, these are the top two places renters turn to when searching for a new apartment¹.

Start by claiming your Google Business Profile and verifying your listings on all ILS platforms. It's not enough to just appear — your information must be accurate and consistent across platforms. Check that your property name, address, phone number, and website link are correct.

Upload professional, high-quality photos that reflect your community. Even small inconsistencies, like spelling out "Street" in one listing and abbreviating it in another, can negatively affect your local search ranking.

To improve visibility, include neighborhood-specific keywords on your website, in listing descriptions, and in blog content. Phrases like "apartments in [neighborhood]" or "pet-friendly apartments near [landmark]" can help boost your property's local SEO.

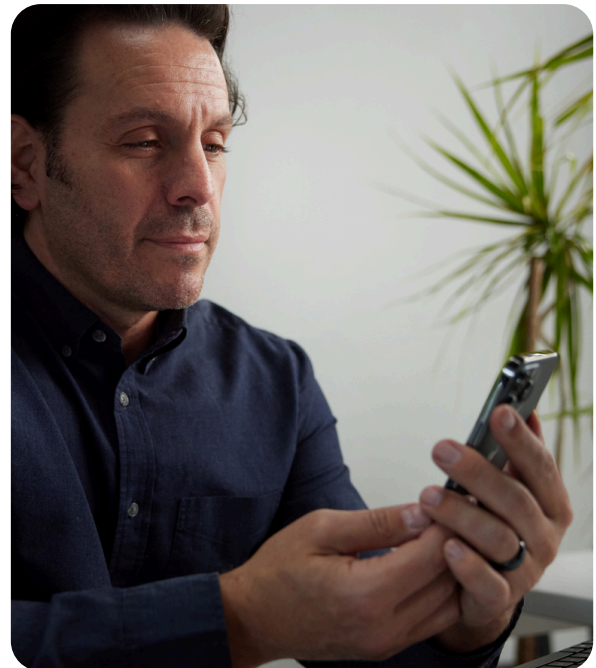
You can also create dedicated landing pages for different neighborhoods or cities, especially if you manage multiple communities within a metro area. Content such as video tours, resident testimonials, and neighborhood guides can improve SEO and be repurposed for Instagram carousels, email newsletters, or other social content.

With 82% of U.S. consumers using mobile devices for "near me" searches (Google), your website must be optimized for mobile. Fast load times and a responsive design help keep prospects engaged and reduce bounce rates.

¹ [2025 Entrata Resident Report](#)

Build a Strong Online Reputation

Your online reputation plays a critical role in whether prospects decide to engage with your property. Make it a priority to request reviews on platforms that matter most to your audience. With the right property management software, your teams can easily automate review requests via email or SMS.



Best practice: Encourage user-generated content such as photos, videos, or testimonials. It adds credibility and trust in a way that branded messaging often can't.

Consistency matters. Your review strategy should focus on recency, frequency, quality, and quantity. Reviews older than a few months carry less weight, and prospects look for recent feedback that reflects the current resident experience. Responding to every review — both positive and negative — demonstrates engagement and transparency, and also positively influences your local SEO.

Impact of online reviews:

- ▶ *71% of renters who read property ratings and reviews say negative content has prevented them from visiting a property².*
- ▶ *84% report that reviews directly influenced their leasing decision. Positive feedback and company responses can serve as powerful endorsements².*

Leverage Paid and Organic Search

Outside of “near me” searches, paid and organic search are two key ways to drive high-intent traffic to your website.

Paid search places your property in a sponsored position on results pages for important search terms. This provides immediate visibility and allows you to scale campaigns quickly. Paid ads also increase brand awareness by keeping your property top of mind as prospects browse.

Organic search relies on optimizing your website structure and content to improve search engine ranking over time. While there’s no cost per click, effective SEO requires regular maintenance and optimization. High-ranking organic results are often seen as more trustworthy than paid ads. In fact, the first result in organic search typically has a 40% click-through rate compared to just 1–2% for paid placements³.

Build a Conversion-Focused Website

Once you’ve driven traffic to your site, your website needs to convert that interest into leads. A poorly optimized site can undermine all your marketing efforts. Because most properties don’t have a dedicated web development team, choosing a property management platform that includes customizable, SEO-friendly templates is essential.

Key features your site should include:

Fresh content. Keep your blog, events calendar, and FAQs up to date. Use generative AI to streamline content creation and reduce the burden on your team.

Detailed floor plans and virtual tours. Give prospects a clear picture of your offerings to encourage action.

Prominent calls to action. Make it easy for visitors to schedule a tour, submit a guest card, or apply.

Chat or text capabilities. Enable real-time communication with human or AI leasing agents.

Mobile-friendly design. With nearly half of all web traffic coming from mobile, responsiveness is non-negotiable⁴.

Real-time pricing and availability. Keep unit data current to avoid surprises that could hurt trust.

Retargeting ads. Stay top of mind with prospects who have visited your site by serving retargeting ads across platforms until they convert or exit your nurture funnel.

² [The Budgeting Benefits of Reputation Management](#)

³ [Google Click-Through Rates \(CTRs\) by Ranking Position in 2025](#)

⁴ [What Percentage of Internet Traffic is Mobile?](#)

Measure and Optimize Digital Marketing Campaigns

Effective digital marketing is driven by data. Go beyond vanity metrics like impressions or website visits. Track lead-to-lease performance using metrics such as cost per lead (CPL), cost per tour (CPT), and cost per lease (CPLs) by channel.

Tools like UTM parameters, dynamic call tracking, and CRM integration help ensure every inquiry is properly attributed. This allows your team to understand which campaigns are delivering real leases — not just clicks.

Optimization comes from applying those insights. Shift budget away from high-CPL, low-conversion campaigns, and double down on the ones that generate leases. Run A/B tests on calls to action, creative assets, and landing page layouts to refine your approach. Reviewing campaign performance on a monthly or even weekly basis ensures your strategy stays aligned with occupancy goals.

The most effective strategies are always evolving. By tracking results, comparing channels, and reallocating spend to what works, you can continually improve your digital marketing performance — and lease up faster.

SECTION II

Prioritizing Lead Engagement

Without the right lead management tools and strategy in place, it becomes difficult to know which leads deserve immediate attention and which ones require a long-term nurture approach. To solve this, start by analyzing previously converted leads. Look at the channels that delivered the most conversions, the time it took to close, lead behaviors, and other relevant patterns. Use that data to build a scoring system that classifies leads as cold, warm, or hot.

An effective lead scoring strategy should be clear, collaborative between marketing and leasing, and flexible enough to evolve over time. It should balance demographic qualifications with engagement behavior, and most importantly, it must be dynamic and actionable. Lead scores should update in real time and trigger automated follow-up steps, rather than sitting unused in a CRM.

Define Your Objectives and Criteria

Begin by identifying what you want to achieve with lead scoring. Are you trying to increase scheduled tours, drive completed applications, or close signed leases? Will leads be re-scored at each stage of the funnel? Outline your goals early to guide your scoring logic.

Next, define your ideal prospect. Consider demographic fit — such as income, household size, pet policy, or location — as well as behavioral intent. Which actions suggest a high likelihood to convert? Which are signs of interest, but not urgency?

High, Medium, Low Value Actions:



High value: Schedules a tour, starts an application, downloads a floor plan



Medium value: Visits the pricing page multiple times, clicks on an email CTA



Low value: Visits your website, likes a social post

Don't forget to consider lead source. Leads from your website or organic search may be more likely to convert than those from paid ILS listings or social ads. Disqualifying behaviors — like incomplete contact info, budget mismatches, or move-in timelines that don't align — should also be factored into your model.

Build a Lead Scoring Framework

Once your criteria are set, assign point values to each demographic attribute and behavioral action. This creates a lead score range, typically from 0 to 100, with thresholds for cold, warm, and hot leads. Each score tier should map to a specific action plan or workflow.

Example lead scoring framework:

- **0–40:** Cold leads (nurture through email or SMS drip campaigns)
- **41–70:** Warm leads (route to leasing team for outreach)
- **71–100:** Hot leads (immediate follow-up, AI leasing agent or human outreach)

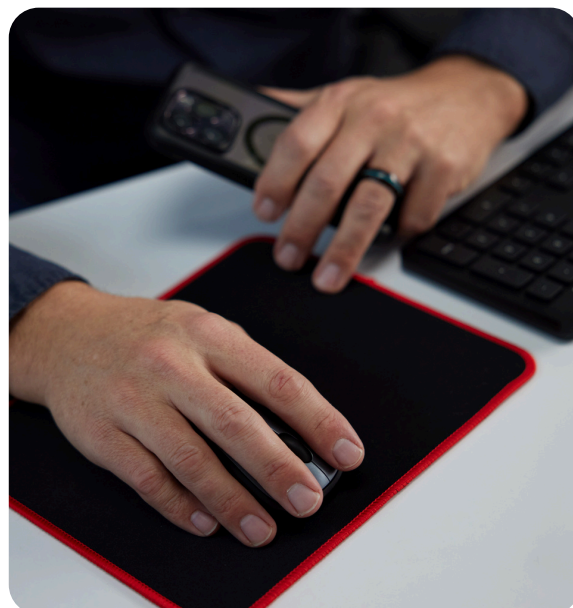
Trigger-based automation should be layered in. For example:

- **At 50 points** → auto-alert the leasing team
- **At 70 points** → prospect is routed to the high-priority queue and contacted by an AI leasing agent

Automate with AI and Integrated CRM Tools

With your scoring system in place, use automation and AI to reduce manual effort and ensure speed. A purpose-built CRM like Entrata enables automatic score updates when a prospect takes key actions. For example, when a lead schedules a tour, their score increases and the next step is triggered — such as a confirmation message or a personalized follow-up text.

The right CRM doesn't just automate, it validates. It helps you understand if your scoring system is accurate by analyzing conversion rates across score tiers. If your "hot" leads aren't converting at a higher rate, adjust your model. Look for CRMs that combine predictive analytics with lead scoring, so your system constantly improves over time based on historical data.



Lead scoring should also be integrated into your leasing workflow. Response times and communication strategies should align with score categories. While much of the engagement can be automated, site teams still play a critical role. It's essential that team members are notified in real time about lead scores and what action is required.

Lead Scoring Best Practices:

- Align lead scoring across marketing and
- Balance demographic fit and engagement behavior
- Ensure lead scores update dynamically in real time
- Use scoring to trigger next steps automatically
- Optimize and refine your scoring model over time based on performance

SECTION III

Lead Nurturing

A strong lead scoring system doesn't just improve how you prioritize follow-ups — it directly shapes your lead nurture strategy. Depending on whether a prospect is categorized as cold, warm, or hot, they should be placed in the appropriate nurture track with messaging and tactics tailored to their stage in the journey.

Nurturing Cold Leads

Cold leads aren't ready to lease yet, but they may be down the line. Your goal is to stay top of mind until they're ready to take action.

Tactics might include:

- Automated drip campaigns highlighting community features, neighborhood guides, and resident testimonials
- Retargeting ads showcasing available units, pet policies, or unique amenities
- Invitations to sign up for newsletters or open house events
- Ongoing updates about unit availability and current specials

Nurturing Warm Leads

Warm leads are showing intent, but still need a bit of encouragement. Focus on deepening engagement and pushing them closer to a decision with:

- Personalized outreach from a leasing agent or AI assistant via email, phone, or SMS
- Text reminders for scheduled tours, unit availability, or limited-time offers
- Automated nudges such as "Lock in today's rate" or "Schedule your tour now"

Nurturing Hot Leads

Hot leads are high intent and ready to act. The goal here is to respond fast and help them convert:

- Respond within five minutes of engagement
- Offer flexible tour options — self-guided or agent-led
- Send follow-up messages personalized to their preferred floor plan or move-in date
- Include direct links to complete the application process, but avoid overwhelming them

Meet Prospects Where They Are

Every prospect communicates differently. That's why a successful nurture strategy must include omnichannel engagement. Use:

- **Email** for content-rich messages and drip campaigns
- **SMS/text** for urgent or time-sensitive reminders
- **AI leasing agents and chatbots** to handle after-hours inquiries
- **Phone calls** as a personalized touchpoint after key events like a property tour

Best Practice: Track which communication channels each prospect responds to best and prioritize that method in future interactions.

Automate with Personalization

Effective nurture campaigns are both automated and personalized. Automation keeps things consistent and efficient, while personalization adds authenticity that builds trust. The more you can tailor messages to a prospect's specific interests — like floor plan, budget, or move-in timeline — the more likely they are to convert.

If a prospect has shown interest in a two-bedroom layout, for example, an email might begin with:

"I saw you were checking out our two-bedroom apartments. Here's a video walkthrough and the latest pricing..."

Use every data point available to make engagement feel natural and relevant.

STAT 

Personalized calls-to-action perform
202% better than generic CTAs⁵

Match Content to Lead Stage

Each lead type needs messaging aligned to their position in the leasing journey:

- **Awareness (cold leads):** Share lifestyle content, neighborhood guides, blog links, and community updates
- **Consideration (warm leads):** Provide floor plan comparisons, virtual tours, new unit alerts, or promotional pricing
- **Decision (hot leads):** Send direct application links, limited-time offers, and personalized move-in incentives



⁵ [15 Call-to-Action Statistics You Need to Know About to Increase Your Conversion Rate](#)

Coordinate the Marketing-to-Leasing Handoff

Smooth transitions between your marketing and leasing teams are critical. Marketing typically owns cold and early warm leads, while leasing takes over late-stage warm and hot leads.

Your CRM should automatically notify team members when a lead changes status so the right follow-up is triggered at the right time. Without automation and real-time alerts, valuable leads can slip through the cracks or receive duplicate, conflicting messages.

Report on Key Metrics

Lead nurture campaigns aren't one-and-done. Preferences shift, behaviors change, and what worked yesterday might not work tomorrow. Track performance consistently to stay agile. Recommended KPIs include:

- Response time by lead tier
- % of tours scheduled per lead category
- Application completion rate
- Lead-to-lease conversion rate by tier
- Channel-specific performance (open, click-through, and response rates)

Regular analysis allows you to optimize campaigns, refine scoring models, and shift resources to the highest-performing tactics.



Automated handoffs and real-time reporting don't just prevent dropped leads, they maximize conversions by ensuring every prospect gets the right follow-up at the right moment.

Conclusion

Today's leasing environment demands speed, personalization, and strategic automation. With rising marketing costs and more competition for every lead, success depends on using the right tools and tactics to drive engagement, without sacrificing the quality of your resident experience.

Key Takeaways

Attract Leads with

Audience-Specific Strategies:

Tailor your messaging and content to specific renter segments, and ensure you show up on the platforms they use most.

Prioritize Local Search and

Online Reputation:

Claim and optimize all listings, ensure mobile readiness, and proactively manage reviews. Positive, recent reviews influence decisions more than ever.

Build a Conversion-Focused Website:

Optimize your site for mobile, ensure fast load speeds, feature prominent CTAs, and use live chat and retargeting ads to boost conversions.

Implement a Data-Driven Lead

Scoring System:

Use lead scoring to prioritize high-intent prospects, trigger next steps automatically, and align leasing efforts with the most qualified leads.

Automate and Personalize Lead Nurturing:

Send timely, relevant content based on where a lead is in the funnel. Use AI and automation to scale without losing the human touch.

Embrace Omnichannel Communication:

Engage on the channel prospects prefer, from email to text to AI chat. The most effective strategies adapt to individual communication habits.

Measure, Report, and Optimize:

Track CPL, CPT, and lead-to-lease conversion rates. Use the data to reallocate budget, test new tactics, and refine your strategy over time.

To learn more about how Entrata can improve digital marketing and lead management at your properties, [request a demo today](#).

