



The Modern Operator's Guide to Manufactured Housing

How a unified system can reduce complexity, improve efficiency, and deliver better outcomes across your portfolio.



WELCOME

Table of Contents

3

Introduction

6

I: Automation

6

II: Human-like Connection

7

III: Resident Empowerment

12

IV: Conclusion

Introduction

Scaling a growing business can be difficult for any real estate venture. But it is made even more difficult when the business is using multiple point solutions cobbled together to manage operations, which is the case for many manufactured home communities (MHC).

In a perfect world, selecting the best-of-breed software for each function sounds like a good idea. In practice, the results are less than satisfactory. Integrations break, communication lags, and the resident becomes unhappy.

When a community cobbles together multiple point solutions to manage their properties, it creates data silos. This adds a layer of complexity to reporting that draws out the process and usually results in reports that are out of date before management even gets to see them.

A decentralized model can also wreak havoc on a community's cash flow. This occurs when payment reminders aren't triggered, leading to an increase in delinquencies and difficulties forecasting rental revenue.

These are just three examples of how data spread across multiple systems leads to bottlenecks that slow the business down. Every handoff in the resident journey is another opportunity for the process to stall.

Over the course of this ebook, we will highlight the benefits of consolidating and centralizing operations, maintaining a single data layer to manage your property, and the impact those two actions have on resident experience and NOI.

Why consolidation?

A primary reason Manufactured Home Communities (MHCs) should consolidate operations is how deeply interconnected every aspect of the business is. Leasing performance directly influences occupancy, which in turn impacts maintenance demands, resident satisfaction, and renewal rates—all of which ultimately determine overall property performance. Despite this inherent synergy, departments have historically operated in silos, each managing **its** own isolated data.

While specialized software exists for nearly every aspect of managing an MHC, relying on disparate tools for a multi-step resident journey—from leasing and payments to community engagement and reporting—creates friction. These fragmented systems struggle to manage the interconnected operations required to maintain a seamless property workflow. If they are all operating independently of one another and data isn't able to pass freely back and forth between systems, your processes could grind to a halt. These challenges manifest themselves in:

- Duplicate data entry
- Multiple logins and workflows
- Inconsistent reporting (due to siloed data)
- Data discrepancies (since data isn't shared, it's harder to know what's right or what's needed)
- Increased training requirements
- Higher software costs

All of those obstacles are exacerbated when you take into account employee turnover.

It's estimated that turnover for these communities is roughly 33% annually, which is higher than the national average of 22% across all industries¹. The more software systems you have, the harder it is to get new employees up to speed and replace the institutional knowledge their predecessors are taking with them.

In addition, having to switch between different software systems can be distracting for your site teams. Research has shown that it takes ~25 minutes to return to work at the same level before being interrupted².

The more software tools you have, the greater the potential for interruptions when switching back and forth. Employees have to get acclimated to a different tool and figure out what they need to do once they switch.

Consolidation isn't going to stop all interruptions, but for decentralized MHCs it can eliminate the interruptions caused by jumping from software tool to software tool and back again.

There are so many opportunities for things to go wrong, especially for a portfolio that is decentralized.



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Ultimately, there are diminishing improvements with each additional software tool added due to the increased complexity each new solution adds. A consolidated tech stack is easier for site teams to manage and also delivers a single source of truth for everything going on at the property.

When MHCs reduce the complexity of management and operate off of a single source of truth, decision-making improves, operations are streamlined, costs are reduced, and residents receive a better experience. The areas most ripe for improvement by consolidating the tech stack include:

- Automating rent collection to improve cash flow
- Mitigating potential fraud at the beginning of the resident journey
- Simplifying the accounting process through automation
- Creating portfolio-level reporting to better support data-driven decisions

Automating rent collection

If a community is tracking payments and delinquencies in a glorified spreadsheet and sending payment reminders manually, it's already behind the eight ball. First, this archaic way of collecting rent is extremely time-consuming for your site teams. Second, as with anything primarily managed by humans, the likelihood that someone slips through the cracks or that errors are made increases.

Taking a reactive approach to rent collection creates a domino effect where:

- **Cash flow suffers**, which impacts your ability to pay vendors and meet your other financial obligations.
- **Delinquencies grow**, which requires you to spend more time on collections, while also exposing the business to more bad debt.
- **Staff burnout increases** as site teams struggle to balance quality resident engagement with an increasing volume of mundane administrative tasks.

An effective way to transform this reactive process to a proactive process is by incorporating AI agents to handle both reminders and payments. Using AI-driven, automated workflows ensures residents receive these requests at the optimal time to increase the likelihood of on-time payment.

AI agents aren't like the chatbots from the past that could only answer specific, frequently asked questions. Today's AI agent can engage with residents just like a human team member can. They can identify issues and resolve them with little to no human intervention. However, if human intervention is needed, the AI agent seamlessly escalates the conversation to a human team member. Every previous interaction is preserved, giving employees the context they need to respond quickly and effectively.

To truly have a successful collection process at scale, it needs to go beyond payment portals and email templates. The ideal approach incorporates the following pillars:



SECTION I

Automation



The biggest problem associated with rent collection is the sheer amount of time traditional processes take to mostly middling results. A modern rent collection solution utilizes AI to automate repetitive outreach, track payments, and reconcile the ledger. Advances in natural language processing and machine learning resulted in an AI Payments agent that can engage with residents in the same way your site teams do. Additionally, AI agents can identify residents who are delinquent and target them for payment or work with them to set up a payment plan to get caught up on their rent.

SECTION II

Human-like connection

We've all been there: Screaming into the void trying to get to a real person on the phone or the chat. That problem is a thing of the past with conversational AI. It identifies issues, resolves them, and provides payment options with little to no human intervention. Best of all, the residents likely wouldn't know they weren't engaging with another human. AI Payments agents text or email residents in a personalized way, communicate due dates, notify when they are past due, and work with residents to secure payment, ensuring everyone gets contacted at the right time, with the right information needed to pay rent on time.





SECTION III

Resident Empowerment

Finally, the right solution gives residents self-service options to pay rent on their own schedule. Ideally, your AI Payments agent will encourage residents to sign up for automatic payments, which decreases the likelihood of a late payment significantly. Even if residents don't ultimately sign up for auto-pay, AI can provide them information on how to split payments, remind residents when to submit payments, and give them the payment flexibility they need to feel fully supported by management.

When residents pay on time, the property has predictable revenue streams that make planning for the future easier. Additionally, you save the time and frustration of having to go through the collection/eviction process.

Fraud prevention

Fraud is on the rise. With each passing year fraudsters are becoming more and more sophisticated in their attacks. To combat this increase in fraud, MHCs need to have sophisticated tools in place that can identify fraud before a lease is signed or the resident tries to pass a bad check.

When unchecked, fraud can have a significant impact on a community's bottom line. Fraud leads to a good portion of bad debt on the books for many MHCs. Things like application fraud, identity misuse, falsified income documentation, and payment reversals are impacting leasing velocity, delinquency rates, operational costs, and NOI.

There's an opportunity for fraud to creep in at many steps in the resident journey, and it starts at the very beginning when the prospect is completing the application. Key components of application fraud include:

- Exaggerated income
- Fabricated employers
- Altered bank statements
- Falsified rental history
- Fabricated documentation

A fraudulent application might go unnoticed for months, but eventually it will rear its ugly head. Fraudulent accounts often lead to:

- Chronic delinquency
- Lease default
- Eviction
- Bad debt write-offs
- An increase in unit turn costs

There are a number of different types of fraud that you should be accounting for, including:

- **Identity fraud** includes stolen identities (actual identity, not synthetic), first-party fraud (using other person's information with their permission), synthetic identities (blended real + fake data to create new credit profiles).
- **Income fraud** includes AI-generated pay stubs, edited PDF bank statements, fake employment letters, and coordinated fake employer phone numbers.
- **Payment fraud** includes fraudulent cashier's checks, frequent ACH reversals
- or credit card chargebacks, and third-party payment manipulation.

As fraud becomes more sophisticated and organized, manufactured housing operators must rethink how they approach risk management. Fraud prevention can no longer rely on a single screening step or a manual review process performed by leasing staff. Instead, effective mitigation requires a layered strategy that integrates technology, standardized processes, and operational discipline across the entire leasing lifecycle.

The most successful operators treat fraud mitigation as a continuous process rather than a single checkpoint during application screening. Each stage, from identity verification to income validation to payment processing, represents an opportunity to confirm legitimacy or detect risk signals early.

Accounting

Research shows that processing an invoice manually costs \$15, compared to \$2.90 when automated, representing an 81% reduction. When you consider the sheer volume of invoices a property

processes each year (57% of invoices require manual entry⁴ currently), replacing manual processing with automation can save you, but cost savings are just the beginning. Manually processed invoices take more than two weeks to process with nearly half of businesses spending over 5 days per month JUST ON INVOICES⁵. The good news is automation can save approximately 80% of invoice processing time⁶.

Accounts Payable

On the accounts payable side of the ledger, late or missing payments are common, especially when payment options are limited or reconciliation is cumbersome⁷. These delays directly affect an organization's ability to cover operating expenses, invest in improvements, and maintain competitive performance.

The biggest problem facing accounting teams is the fact that processing invoices by hand isn't sustainable or scalable long term. Not only is it time-consuming and expensive, it's also more prone to errors than automated solutions, and errors waste money and can harm relationships with vendors.

This is exacerbated when accounts payable data is spread out across multiple systems and spreadsheets at disparate communities in your portfolio. The end result is hours (if not days) spent chasing approvals, filing documents, and submitting payments. Each delay has the potential to increase labor costs or cause you to miss vendor discounts associated with timely payments.

Advances in accounting technology in recent years enable properties to automate invoice processing. Optical character recognition captures data from invoices instantly and places them into your ledger. From there, automated workflows route invoices to the right approver and send reminders until approval is received and payment is remitted. With the right

³ [QuickBooks accounts payable automation](#)

⁴ [QuickBooks accounts payable automation](#)

⁵ [The Hidden Costs of Manual Accounts Payable and How Automation Solves Them](#)

⁶ [How Automated Invoice Processing Saves Small Businesses Time and Money](#)

⁷ [What are Accounts Receivable in Property Management?](#)

property management software, all of this happens in the same platform, making invoice data easily accessible during an audit or vendor inquiry.

Finally, built-in validation rules can prevent duplicate payments by checking invoice numbers, dates, and amounts. Automated three-way matching compares the purchase order, invoice, and receipt to ensure accuracy before payment.

Accounts Receivable

Just like accounts payable, when rent payments aren't collected in a timely manner, it makes forecasting into the future difficult. Manual rent collection eats up a lot of your site team's time and can result in strained resident relationships and uncomfortable conversations for site teams.

A modern rent collection solution utilizes AI to automate repetitive outreach, payment tracking, and ledger reconciliation. Advances in natural language processing and machine learning resulted in an AI Payments agent that

Accounts Payable Best Practices

1. Consolidate accounting systems
2. Automate manual processes
3. Simplify complex approval workflows
4. Deliver real-time visibility into available cash flow
5. Validation of invoices and payments



can engage with residents in the same way your site teams do. These agents go way beyond chatbots and voice assistants that were limited to canned answers that could make residents mad if their question didn't fit into the rigid parameters.

When AR isn't consolidated into a single platform, it becomes more difficult to stay on top of which accounts are overdue and by how much. This lack of visibility can also delay when issues or delinquency notices are sent or result in inaccurate statements (i.e. fees, utilities, etc. are wrong), which further delays when residents make payments—either because they haven't received notice or they are disputing the amount owed.

These difficulties are easy to overcome under a consolidated platform that includes AR aging reports and forecasting tools to highlight high-risk accounts before they become serious problems. It also enables recurring charges to automatically appear on the resident ledger so that residents always see the correct balance they owe.

Reporting

Reports are more than spreadsheets and charts. They're the tools that turn raw data into insights, strategy, and action. By looking at the benefits of reporting, you'll see how these tools create the foundation for stronger decision-making, smoother operations, and more resilient communities.

Visibility into performance

Without reporting, it's like you're flying blind. Reporting gives community managers and owners a clear picture of how marketing, leasing, occupancy, renewals, revenue, and expenses are actually performing.

Protecting and growing the business

Protecting and growing the business

Reports can show where money is leaking

(i.e., bad debt, long lot vacancies, etc.) along with potential growth opportunities.

Forecasting and future-proofing

Reporting isn't just backward-looking. It also helps you anticipate and plan for future risks and opportunities.

Transparency and trust

Strong reporting fosters trust among property managers, teams, and ownership groups by providing transparency into the communities' performance. It also demonstrates that you're actively monitoring results and taking proactive steps to stay competitive.

When building your reporting process, there are a few must-haves to set yourself up for success. First, you'll want to consolidate all of your data into a single source of truth. This is made easier if you're already utilizing an all-in-one property management platform that pulls in data from your CRM, marketing and leasing, accounting, maintenance, utility billing, and survey and reputation management platforms.

The key is ensuring you have a clean, unified data layer across your portfolio that is easily accessed by your reporting engine (or is part of your property management platform already). That means all systems (CRM, accounting, marketing, leasing, maintenance, etc.) draw from a single, centralized source of truth. Data flows seamlessly across tools and departments.

At the end of the day, reporting is about driving insights, confidence, and control through the powerful data you already have at your disposal, but might not be utilizing to the best of your ability. The right reports empower community managers, owners, and operators to move from reactive problem-solving to proactive decision-making. They help you understand not just where your business stands today, but also where it's headed tomorrow.



Bringing it all together with Entrata's manufactured housing solution

Throughout this ebook, one theme has remained constant: operational challenges rarely exist in isolation. Delinquencies affect cash flow. Fraud increases bad debt. Manual accounting slows decision-making. Disconnected reporting limits visibility. When these processes live in separate systems, every inefficiency compounds the next.

Entrata's Manufactured Housing solution was designed to eliminate these disconnects by bringing every critical operational function together on a single platform.

Rather than managing separate software for leasing, resident communications, payments, accounting, reporting, and operations, manufactured housing operators can manage their entire portfolio from one centralized system built on a unified data layer. Information is entered once it becomes available across every department, reducing duplicate work, improving accuracy, and giving teams real-time visibility into community performance.

With Entrata, operators can:

- Automate rent collection and resident communications
- Deliver automated payment reminders through AI-powered resident interactions
- Provide residents with convenient digital payment options
- Reduce delinquencies while creating more predictable cash flow

Reduce fraud before it impacts the business

- Verify identities and validate applicant information during the leasing process
- Identify potential fraud risks before lease execution
- Protect communities from costly bad debt, evictions, and payment fraud

Modernize accounting operations

- Automate invoice capture and approval workflows
- Eliminate manual data entry with OCR technology
- Simplify accounts payable while maintaining complete audit trails

- Improve financial accuracy and reduce processing costs

Create a true single source of truth

- Connect leasing, accounting, maintenance, marketing, utilities, and resident engagement data
- Eliminate reporting silos and conflicting data sources
- Give leadership portfolio-wide visibility through real-time dashboards and reporting

Empower site teams

- Reduce the number of systems employees must learn and manage
- Standardize workflows across every community

- Spend less time on administrative tasks and more time serving residents

The result is more than operational efficiency. It creates a better experience for everyone involved. Residents benefit from faster service, simpler payment options, and more responsive communication. Site teams spend less time navigating software and more time building relationships. Ownership gains the visibility needed to make confident, data-driven decisions that improve NOI.

As manufactured housing portfolios continue to grow, having a connected operating platform becomes a competitive advantage. Not just because it reduces costs, but because it allows operators to scale without adding unnecessary complexity.

Conclusion

Manufactured housing operators are under increasing pressure to do more with less. Rising operating costs, evolving resident expectations, labor shortages, and increasingly sophisticated fraud have made efficient operations more important than ever.

While many organizations have addressed these challenges by adding new software over time, layering point solutions often creates new problems. Disconnected systems slow workflows, increase manual work, limit visibility, and make it harder for teams to deliver exceptional resident experiences.

The alternative is a unified approach.

By consolidating operations onto a single platform, operators can automate repetitive tasks, improve financial performance, strengthen fraud prevention, simplify accounting, and gain real-time visibility into portfolio performance.

Instead of reacting to problems after they occur, they can proactively manage their communities with confidence.

The main goal is producing better outcomes, not adding more and more technology. The right platform enables site teams to spend less time on administrative work and more time serving residents. It equips leadership with reliable data to make smarter decisions. And it creates a scalable operational foundation that supports growth for years to come.

As the manufactured housing industry continues to evolve, the communities that embrace connected, data-driven operations will be best positioned to increase efficiency, improve resident satisfaction, and maximize long-term profitability.