



entrata[®]

The Power of Context in Resident Communication

How to combine authenticity and efficiency to create more meaningful resident experiences

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Introduction

Miscommunications happen. No matter how hard your onsite, leasing, and service teams try, residents can sometimes misinterpret a message or miss important information altogether. When communication breaks down, resident satisfaction suffers, site teams become less effective, and small issues can quickly become larger problems.

Managing communities is operationally complex, and balancing high-touch resident interactions with automated communication only adds to the challenge. That's why property management software plays such a critical role, connecting leasing, maintenance, operations, and resident engagement within one unified operating system.

With each passing year, it becomes more difficult to capture residents' attention. Think about how many messages you receive in a day and which ones actually cut through the noise. They're often the important ones (credit cards, rent, mortgages, etc.) or messages from people and businesses you've built genuine relationships with. Resident communication is no longer just a customer service function. It's an operational strategy that impacts retention, staffing efficiency, reputation management, and long-term portfolio performance.



SECTION I

Impacts of Poor Communication

Poor communication has a direct impact on resident satisfaction and retention. Many factors influence where someone chooses to live and whether they decide to stay long term. Residents aren't just evaluating the apartment home or the price, they're evaluating the experience. That includes clear, timely communication about maintenance timelines, policy changes, and community updates. Even when service is delivered well, poor communication about what's happening and when can leave residents frustrated with the overall experience.

Poor communication also increases friction for employees. Few things are more frustrating than duplicative work, and much of it stems from miscommunication between teams or incomplete documentation in your system of record. For example:

- A vague maintenance ticket → wrong tools or parts → repeat visits
- Unclear lease terms → disputes or escalations
- Inconsistent messaging from site teams → resident distrust

Communication also plays a critical role in issue and crisis management. Whether addressing maintenance requests, policy changes, or rent adjustments, how a message is delivered, its channel, timing, and tone, can be nearly as important as the message itself. Demonstrating empathy and clearly addressing resident concerns can help prevent issues from escalating.

Effective communication also helps communities maintain a strong online reputation. Communication, customer service, and maintenance are among the most influential drivers of online reviews, often outweighing amenities, which historically carried more weight. All three are closely tied to the quality of resident engagement. When communities communicate

regularly and transparently, residents feel informed and valued. That can increase participation in community initiatives, support higher renewal rates, and improve overall review sentiment.

Poor communication can also prevent you from telling your own story. When you fail to communicate consistently with residents, you lose control of the narrative. Residents fill in the gaps themselves, and when that happens, credibility is often the first thing lost.

Where does most miscommunication happen?

- Not using the resident's preferred channels
- Assuming instead of confirming
- Failure to follow up and get closure
- Using too much technical jargon when plain language would work
- Failure to document/lack of robust CRM
- Language barriers that could be solved by generative AI
- Not matching tone or trying to de-escalate situations

Throughout this e-book, we'll explore practical ways to reduce miscommunication, with a particular focus on the role context plays in resident interactions. In many cases, a lack of context is the root cause behind the challenges discussed above.

We'll also examine how a unified operating system with a shared data layer can help solve those challenges. When every resident interaction is captured in a single system of record, onsite teams have the context they need to deliver more informed, consistent, and effective experiences at every stage of the resident journey, from prospect engagement to lease renewal.

SECTION II

Key Communication Skills to Build

Many communication breakdowns can be avoided by developing a few core skills and supporting them with the right technology. Improving resident communication isn't just about being polite, it's about creating consistent, repeatable behaviors that enhance the resident experience, increase renewals, and support stronger property performance.

Communication, customer service, and maintenance remain some of the most influential drivers of online reviews¹. While amenities once played a larger role, residents increasingly evaluate their experience based on how effectively a community communicates, responds to concerns, and delivers service. Strong resident engagement helps build trust, improve satisfaction, and strengthen a community's reputation.

The challenge is finding a balance between the authenticity of genuine human interaction and the efficiency of automated communication². As agentic AI continues to evolve, digital interactions with residents will feel



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increasingly natural and personalized. Unlike generative AI, which primarily creates content based on prompts, agentic AI can reason, make decisions, and take action with limited supervision. This allows site teams to spend less time on routine tasks and more time focusing on the moments that matter most to residents.

Properties should empower site teams to engage with residents in ways that feel authentic and personal while maintaining professionalism. Technology should support those interactions—not replace them.

As recently as two years ago, an NMHC report³ found that resident expectations for technology were rising and that chatbot technology alone was not enough to create meaningful connections between residents and their communities. That's why automation and AI should never be viewed as a complete replacement for human interaction. The key is understanding which conversations can be effectively automated and which require empathy, context, and a more personal approach.

¹ Best Practices to Incorporate Authentic Resident Communication

² Ibid

³ [Best Practices to Incorporate Authentic Resident Communication](#)

SECTION III

The Importance of Continuity

Site teams are at the center of the resident experience. They build relationships, manage day-to-day operations, and create a sense of community. Historically, when team members left, much of their knowledge left with them, forcing new employees to rebuild context and relationships from scratch.

As turnover occurs, resident communication can suffer when institutional knowledge is lost. Without access to previous interactions, preferences, and communication history, site teams may struggle to provide the consistent, informed experience residents expect.

But when you have a system of record that has a unified data layer that has information about all of your resident interactions from application to maintenance to renewals and everything in between, that transition should be seamless regardless of who is speaking with the customers³.

When your property management software contains resident data, including documented interactions, transitions between outgoing and incoming employees become more seamless. New team members can quickly access the context they need to understand previous conversations, answer questions, and resolve issues in real time.

When communication gaps occur, resident satisfaction suffers. As you map communication workflows, look at every touchpoint from multiple angles to identify and close those gaps before they affect the resident experience.



³ Keeping Residents Happy: 6 Communication Tips for Managers

SECTION IV

Why Context Matters in Communication



Effective communication starts with trust, and trust is built through clear, concise, and consistent messaging. Residents are more likely to engage when they know communication is relevant to their needs and not filled with unnecessary information. Keeping messages focused and purposeful makes them easier to understand, more memorable, and more likely to drive action over time.

Context is what makes communication effective. Without it, disconnects can form between residents and site teams, leading to misunderstandings, operational bottlenecks, and lower resident satisfaction. To create more meaningful resident interactions, properties should focus on the following⁴:

Reduces confusion and uncertainty

When the reasons behind policy changes, maintenance projects, or community updates are clearly explained, residents stay informed and are less likely to feel confused or frustrated.

Builds trust and encourages engagement

Trust is earned through consistent, relevant communication. When residents trust the information they receive, they are more likely to respond, participate in community initiatives, and engage with site teams.

Enables personalization

Context is valuable in more than just policy communication. It also helps site teams reference previous conversations, resident preferences, and past interactions. This creates a more personalized experience and demonstrates that residents are recognized as individuals, not just records in a system.

Minimizes misunderstandings

Clear communication backed by relevant context helps reduce frustration and prevent issues from escalating. This is especially important during high-impact moments such as lease renewals, maintenance requests, or policy changes. Consistent follow-up reinforces accountability and shows residents their concerns are being addressed.

⁴ Best Practices to Incorporate Authentic Resident Communication

SECTION V

Authenticity and Resident Communication

Authenticity in resident communication doesn't happen by accident. It's built through honest, contextual interactions. When site teams understand a resident's history, preferences, concerns, and current situation, communication becomes more relevant, empathetic, and effective.

The importance of authenticity cannot be overstated. Today's residents expect more than transactional updates and automated reminders. They want communication that feels human, relevant, and trustworthy. When residents feel heard and understood, they are more likely to engage positively with their community, renew their leases, and view the property team as a trusted resource rather than simply a service provider.

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Authenticity also plays a critical role in shaping the resident experience. Generic, one-size-fits-all messaging can feel impersonal and disconnected from what residents are actually experiencing. Contextual communication, on the other hand, acknowledges a resident's unique situation, timing, and needs. Whether it's following up on a maintenance request, communicating during a community disruption, or reaching out during the renewal process, residents respond more positively when communication feels sincere, thoughtful, and relevant.

Keys to Authenticity

Relevance: Communicate based on a resident's current experience, lifecycle stage, or recent interaction rather than relying on broad, generalized messaging.

Empathy: Recognize the resident's perspective and respond with understanding, especially during stressful situations such as maintenance issues, late payments, or unexpected disruptions.

Consistency: Ensure communication aligns across channels and team members so residents receive a cohesive experience every time they interact with your community.

Transparency: Be honest and proactive when sharing updates, timelines, or challenges. Residents appreciate clear communication, even when the news is not ideal.

Timeliness: Deliver communication when it is most meaningful. Effective communication depends as much on timing as it does on content.

Personalization with purpose: Move beyond simply using a resident's name. Tailor communication to reflect specific needs, preferences, behaviors, or previous interactions.

Human tone: Communicate in a way that feels conversational, approachable, and genuine rather than scripted or robotic.

Active listening and feedback: Create opportunities for residents to share concerns and feedback, then use those insights to improve future communication.

Awareness of resident history: Understand recent service requests, communication history, and prior concerns so every interaction feels informed and considerate.

When authenticity becomes part of a community's communication strategy, it strengthens trust, improves resident satisfaction, and fosters a stronger sense of community. Residents are far more likely to engage with communication that feels meaningful rather than purely operational.

SECTION VI

Always Listen Before Answering

Many communication breakdowns occur because people focus on making their own point rather than understanding someone else's perspective. When that happens, conversations become one-sided, misunderstandings increase, and opportunities to resolve issues are missed.

Effective communication starts with listening. Taking the time to understand a resident's concern before responding leads to faster resolutions, stronger relationships, and better outcomes. Before proposing a solution or taking action, make sure the resident feels heard and that the root issue has been fully understood.

One of the most effective ways to stay connected to resident sentiment is by keeping the feedback loop open. Surveys, online reviews, social media comments, and resident feedback all provide valuable insight into how people are experiencing your community in real time. Beyond reputation management, this feedback helps uncover trends in satisfaction, service quality, communication effectiveness, and trust.

It's equally important to provide residents with multiple ways to communicate. Whether they prefer text, email, phone, chat, or in-person conversations, residents should be able to engage through the channel that feels most convenient to them. When communication options are limited, residents may feel their concerns are not being heard, which can erode trust and satisfaction over time.

Keep It Simple

Residents are busy, and their attention is limited. They don't have time to sort through unnecessary information. Every message should be timely, relevant, and supported by the context needed to make it meaningful.

Before sending a message, ask yourself a simple question: Does the resident need this information right now? If the answer is no, reconsider whether the communication is necessary. Prioritizing relevance over volume helps build trust and ensures residents pay attention when important messages arrive.

Most importantly, structure communication so it is easy to consume and focused on the key takeaways. Deliver messages through the resident's preferred channel whenever possible.



SECTION VII

How Entrata Helps Properties Deliver More Contextual Resident Communication

Delivering authentic, contextual communication at scale is difficult without the right technology foundation. Site teams are already balancing leasing, renewals, maintenance coordination, resident concerns, and operational responsibilities. Expecting them to manually track every interaction and personalize every conversation without centralized systems is not sustainable.

That's where technology plays a critical role.

Entrata helps properties create more connected resident experiences by bringing together the data, workflows, and communication tools needed to support both operational efficiency and meaningful engagement within a single operating system.

One of the biggest barriers to contextual communication is fragmented data. When resident information exists across disconnected systems, site teams lack the visibility needed to fully understand the resident journey.

Entrata's unified platform centralizes:

- Leasing activity
- Resident communications
- Maintenance history
- Payment information
- Renewals
- Engagement data

This unified system of record gives teams the context they need before every interaction, helping communication feel informed, timely, and personalized rather than reactive or generic.

Better Continuity Despite Staff Turnover

Turnover is a reality in property management, but resident relationships shouldn't have to restart every time staffing changes occur. With resident interactions and communication history documented in one place, new team members can quickly understand previous concerns,

communication preferences, ongoing service issues, and prior touch-points. This continuity helps preserve trust, reduce frustration, and maintain a consistent resident experience during operational transitions.

Automation that supports human interaction

Automation is essential for operational efficiency, but residents still expect empathy and authenticity during important moments. Entrata helps properties automate routine communication workflows such as payment reminders, maintenance updates, tour follow-ups, and renewal outreach while empowering site teams to step in personally when conversations require additional context or care. By combining automation with resident data and communication history, properties can create experiences that feel both efficient and human.

AI-powered tools that improve responsiveness

Generative and agentic AI technologies are creating new opportunities for property teams to communicate more effectively at scale. Entrata's AI-driven capabilities can help reduce response times, surface relevant resident information, assist with communication drafting, support multilingual conversations, and improve consistency across channels. Rather than replacing human interaction, AI helps eliminate repetitive administrative tasks so site teams can focus on higher-value resident experiences and relationship building.

Omnichannel communication preferences

Residents expect flexibility in how they communicate. Some prefer email, while others prefer text messages, resident portals, mobile apps, phone calls, or in-person conversations. Entrata helps properties manage communication across channels while maintaining visibility into the full conversation history. This reduces communication gaps and helps ensure residents receive information through the channels they are most likely to engage with.

Conclusion

Communication has always been an important part of property management, but resident expectations have evolved. Today's residents expect communication that is timely, relevant, transparent, and authentic. Generic messaging and disconnected interactions no longer deliver the experience residents expect.

At the same time, site teams face increasing pressure to do more with less. They need tools and workflows that improve efficiency without sacrificing the human side of resident relationships.

That is why context matters.

Context transforms communication from reactive to proactive. It helps properties move beyond transactional interactions and create experiences that feel personalized, informed, and trustworthy. Whether addressing maintenance concerns, navigating renewals, communicating policy updates, or managing day-to-day resident engagement, contextual communication reduces friction and strengthens relationships over time.

Authenticity and efficiency are not competing priorities. With the right combination of technology, automation, unified data, and human interaction, properties can achieve both.

At the end of the day, the focus should be on delivering meaningful communication to residents.

