



# THE NEW APARTMENT TOUR

3 ways to modernize tours & get more leases

## INTRODUCTION

# It's time to reimagine apartment tours.

**Did you know?**

38% of renters only toured 1-2 properties in their most recent apartment search<sup>1</sup>

With more renters than ever beginning their apartment tours online — and sometimes even completing the leasing process too — we need to remove the limitations imposed by office hours, staffing and physical locations.

Let's face it, long before a prospective renter sets foot on our properties, they're already deciding whether they like us or not.

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<sup>1</sup>2020 NMHC/Kingsley Apartment Resident Preferences Report

So what do we need to do to provide a good virtual experience?

Keep reading to discover [three new apartment tour strategies](#) that will help your brand stand out in an increasingly competitive market.

**You'll learn how to:**

- Attract more renters to your virtual front door
- Lease more units with self-guided tours
- Convert more digital leads with authentically human interactions



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STRATEGY 1

# YOUR VIRTUAL FRONT DOOR

What renters expect to see on a property website<sup>2</sup>



Think of your property website as your virtual front door; this is where the new apartment tour begins. Use it to give renters the information they need to picture themselves moving in. That means that your website needs to have unit specifics, amenity details, property maps and neighborhood information.

Additionally, you need to provide real photos of both the property and the unit to build trust with your prospects.

Online renters don't want to see the model unit with the newest upgrades. They want to see the exact apartment they might live in.

On the next pages, you'll learn about **four photo and video moments** that are critical to renters.

<sup>2</sup>2020 NMHC/Kingsley Apartment Resident Preferences Report



## STRATEGY 1 // YOUR VIRTUAL FRONT DOOR

# PHOTOS



### Unit-level photos

Ask leasing agents to photograph every ready vacant apartment and post them with your apartment availability. Now your customer can see the actual apartment they will rent!

### Amenity photos

Seeing is believing. If you say you have a pool, fitness center, picnic area, etc., include a picture of each one. No one is comfortable basing their rental decision on words alone.



## STRATEGY 1 // YOUR VIRTUAL FRONT DOOR

# VIDEOS



### Video walk-throughs

Don't be intimidated. Renters don't need to see slickly produced videos. They want to see a member of your team walking them through their potential apartment. [Post an agent-hosted video tour with every floor plan on your website.](#)

### Virtual 3D tours

Adding virtual 3D tours allows your website visitors to step through the property and explore at their own pace. Creating one tour for every floor plan should be enough to help renters understand the layout.



## STRATEGY 2

## SELF-GUIDED TOURS



After hours?  
Holiday?  
Double booked?  
**The tour can  
still go on!**

**Attract busy renters and create more leasing opportunities when you add self-guided tours as an option at your properties.**

Unlike traditional, agent-led tours, self-guided tours let renters schedule and enjoy apartment tours at a time and pace that works for them. They also let you host more tours without expanding your staff.

Next, we'll show you **four must-have features** to consider when assessing your options. And we'll share **the data you need** to convince stakeholders at your company to invest in self-guided tours.



# MUST-HAVES

“ Our guests have fully embraced the concept of self-guided tours. We’ve found they spend much more time on the tour than we usually would. Better still, **59** self-guided tours were booked in our first six weeks at one property. ”

JAMIN HARKNESS  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
THE MANAGEMENT GROUP

## Convenience

Allow prospects to book both self-guided and traditional tours on your website. You should be able to set tour hour limitations and instantly see bookings on your calendar.

## Authentication

Know who is walking onto your property. Confirm prospects are who they say they are before they visit. Use [ID verification technology](#) to prevent identity fraud before it begins.

## Safety

Provide a secure tour experience for guests as well as your team with easy smart locks and digital motion sensors.

## Seamless UX

Make sure renters and leasing agents can go from tour to application to lease without cumbersome tech or missing data. Does your tech work together?



## STRATEGY 2 // SELF-GUIDED TOURS

## DATA

Need proof that people want self-guided tours? Consider this recent survey of 3,126 renters<sup>3</sup>:

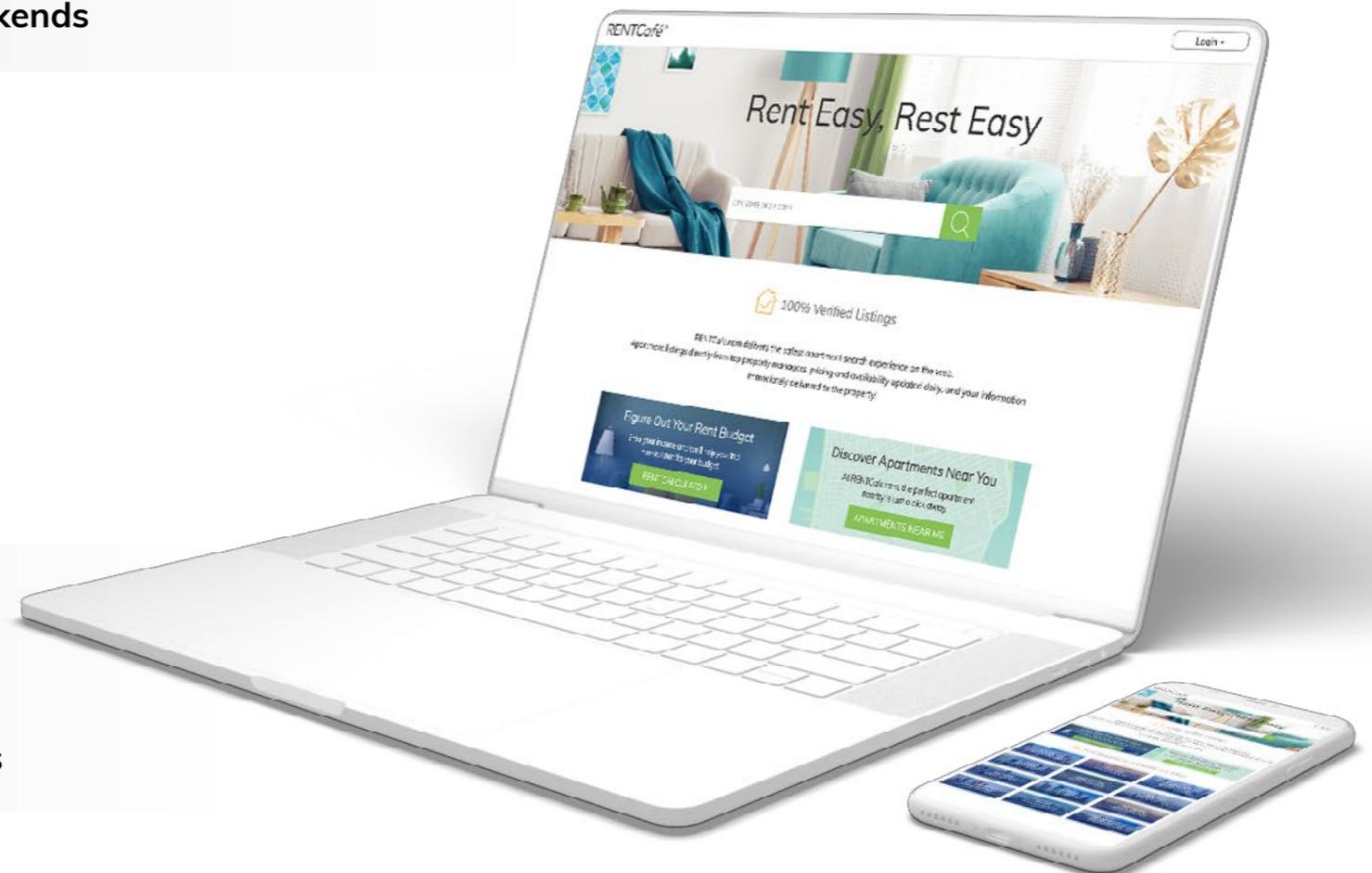
- 83% of apartment shoppers said they would take a self-guided tour if available
- 63% of those said they'd prefer a self-guided tour so they could go at their own pace
- 59% prefer self-guided tours so they can practice social distancing
- 43% want to be able to tour after hours or on weekends

## Self-guided tours in real life

Atlanta-based property management company

The Management Group saw these results in a 6-week period after implementing RENTCafé Self-Guided Tours:

- 59 self-guided tours booked
- 22 applications
- 5 declined tours based on failed ID authentications



<sup>3</sup>RENTCafe.com survey May 2020



## STRATEGY 3

## AUTHENTIC INTERACTIONS



If you're worried that the new apartment tour is going to make leasing agents obsolete, don't be! Technology can only do so much. All things being somewhat equal between you and your closest competition, what sets you apart? Your team and their exceptional service.

Most renters need to feel a human connection before making a leasing decision. In the next few pages, you'll **discover three places authentic, human interactions make a difference** in the leasing process.



## STRATEGY 3 // AUTHENTIC INTERACTIONS

## FOLLOW-UPS

You already know that it's a best practice to follow up with every lead. But **how you follow up makes all the difference.** Sending an automated email that's prepopulated with the prospect's name isn't enough to set your brand apart. Instead, make a personal connection via call, text or video.

Here's what we recommend for leasing agents:

Record a quick video on your smartphone that you can easily share in a text or email.

- **Introduce yourself**
- **Answer their question, whether it was about pricing, location or something else**
- **Share your favorite thing about the property – why do you work there?**
- **Be authentic! Ditch the script and be yourself**



## STRATEGY 3 // AUTHENTIC INTERACTIONS

## REVIEWS &amp; SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to showcase your brand's personality, authenticity and responsiveness everywhere prospective renters might find you.

## Review websites

- **Do** reply to every review
- **Don't** ignore negative reviews
- **Do** write unique responses
- **Don't** copy and paste generic replies
- **Do** monitor competitor reviews
- **Don't** lose sight of consumer sentiment

## Social media

- **Do** showcase your team
- **Don't** just post listings
- **Do** share neighborhood details
- **Don't** go weeks between posts

Not sure you have the bandwidth to keep up? Look into [reputation management platforms and services](#) to keep your onsite team focused on in-person interactions.

**72%** of renters referenced apartment review sites in their most recent search

**79%** of renters who used review sites said negative reviews stopped them from touring properties

2020 NMHC/Kingsley Apartment Resident Preferences Report



## THE NEW APARTMENT TOUR CHECKLIST

## 3 WAYS TO MODERNIZE TOURS &amp; GET MORE LEASES

## 1. Start tours through your virtual front door

**Add to your website:**

- 5 photos of every ready vacant unit
- At least 1 photo of every amenity
- Video walkthroughs of every floor plan
- Property maps and neighborhood information

**Tip: Ask leasing agents to get new photos and videos every time a unit, amenity or floor plan model is cleaned or refreshed.**

## 2. Offer self-guided tours to expand your touring capacity

**Make sure renters can:**

- Book tours online at times that work for them
- Access the right apartment safely at the right time
- Tour hassle-free, without paying or downloading an app
- Enjoy a contactless experience at their own pace

**Make sure you can:**

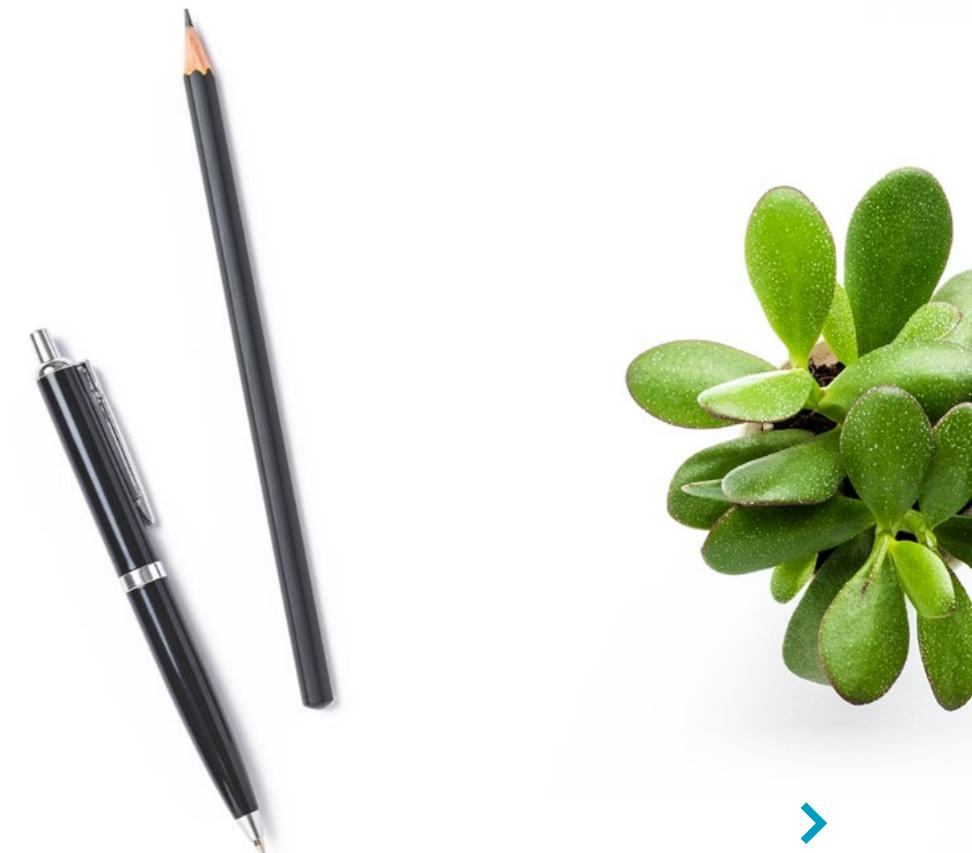
- Set limitations on the times and lengths of tours
- Authenticate IDs to prevent identity fraud
- Verify when guests are on the property
- Track and follow up with self-guided tour prospects

## 3. Convert more digital leads with authentic interactions

**Showcase your brand's personality and make a human connection:**

- Ask leasing agents to create video follow-ups for every tour
- Post unique replies to reviews on apartment ratings sites
- Highlight your members on social media

**Tip: Create a reputation management program or work with experts to ensure your properties make the right impression on prospects both before and after they tour.**

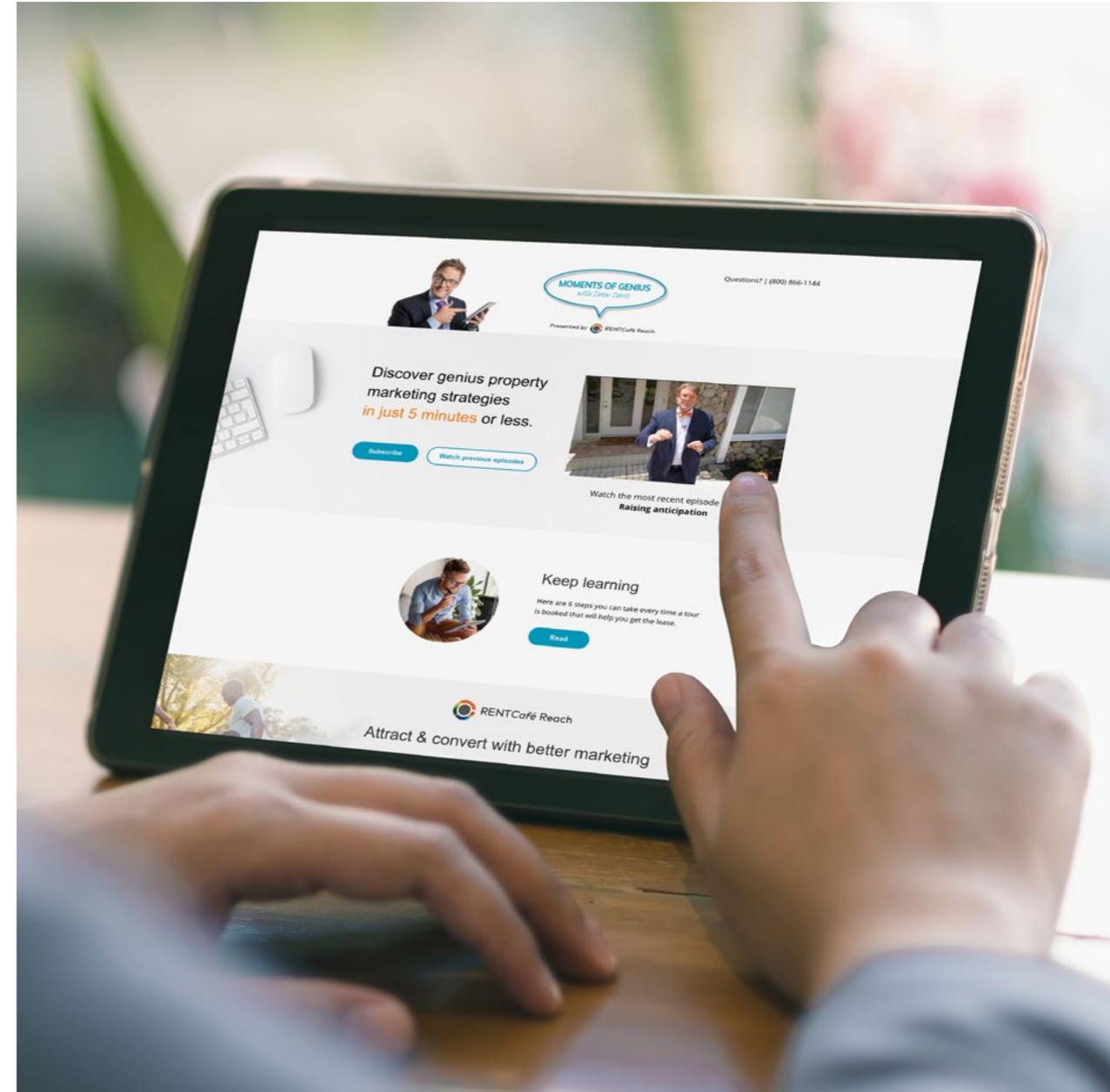


BONUS

# TIPS FROM A PRO

With these three strategies to innovate the apartment tour experience, you will be sharing, showing and helping prospects become residents in no time.

Ready to go above and beyond? Watch Moments of Genius with award-winning marketer Andrew Davis. He will teach you how to book more tours, get better reviews and improve your customer experience.





## Start today

If you're ready to create a new apartment tour experience, we'd love to help. Our friendly [RENTCafé Reach](#) team specializes in helping property management business attract and convert online renters. [Get in touch](#) or [join a webinar](#) to learn about the range of expert services available to you.



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