

The **TENANT EXPERIENCE**

Avoid these 4 Common Mistakes



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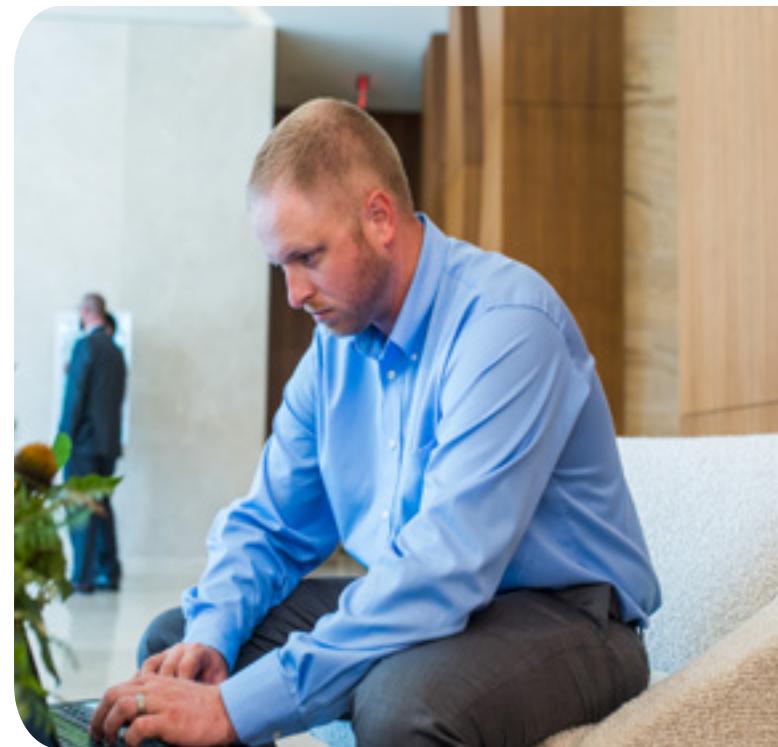
INTRODUCTION

How can property managers juggle their day to day operations while providing an exceptional tenant experience?

As a property manager, you know the importance of managing tenant experience. Regardless of the industry, customer experience is paramount in competing to attract new prospects, close new deals and retain existing business.

With technology factored in, a tenant–centric approach becomes even more crucial. In an age where your tenants are posting and talking about everything online, you must be proactive to avoid any negative publicity which now travels faster and wider than ever before. Conversely, if a tenant has an exceptional experience with your building, they have the power to share that with an entire network of people. Advocacy like this can only come from a completely satisfied tenant. As realists, we all know you won't be able to please everyone and, unfortunately, people are more apt to share a negative experience than a positive one. Either way, we must do our part to manage the experience to ensure the most positive effect on brand reputation.

Property managers who make the effort to listen and give their tenants what they need can be more likely to avoid high vacancy rates and unruly renters. Taking the time to use the interaction you have with your tenants in a positive and constructive way will improve their overall experience.



Standing Out

You know how important it is to create that exceptional experience for your tenants. The problem? So do all your industry competitors. How can you make sure your efforts aren't wasted and simply drowned out by the competition? What improvements can you realistically implement that will make an impact in setting you apart without blowing the budget? That's what this guide aims to help you with.

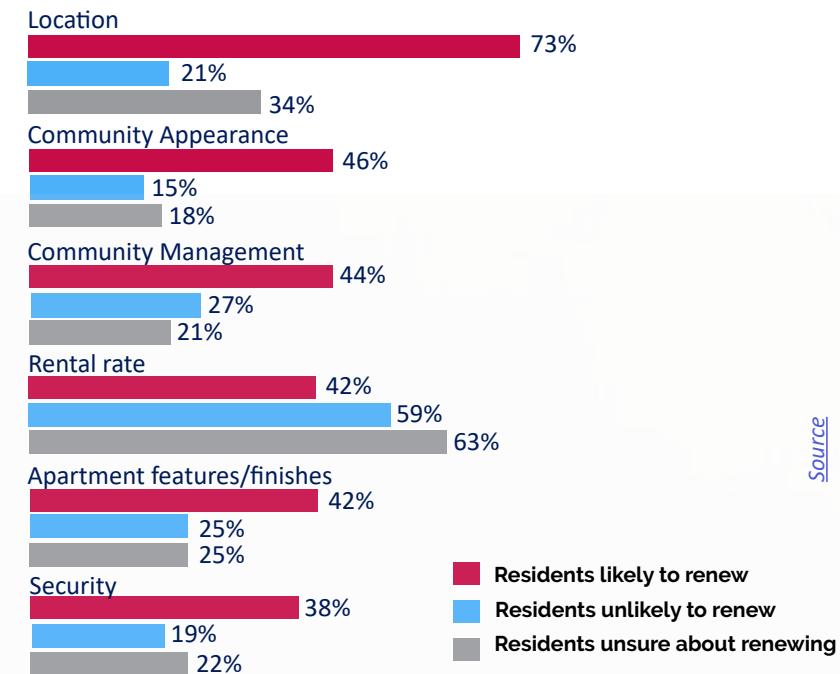
Improving Your Tenant Experience

At Kings III, our focus is on service to all people (your tenants, employees and visitors) in less than desirable circumstances—specifically, when they find themselves needing to reach out for emergency aid. In our work with multifamily and commercial property managers and owners, we've seen that often times there is extreme focus on how to improve the tenant experience with the newest amenities available that might make a splash. However, more practical items are often overlooked. Simple oversights in basic processes being more difficult than need be or not having a consistent level of service in interactions across the business will certainly detract from an otherwise positive experience. We will focus on these types of mistakes in this guide along with tips on how to remedy them.

Multifamily tenants

Top Renewal Decision Factors

Kingsley Associates recently surveyed more than 670,000 to quantify what's most important to those up for a renewal since there are an increasing amount of options in the search for their next apartment.



Source

Commercial tenants

Tenant evaluation of broad property management categories by average rank

Ranking shows scores from 1 - 5, 5 being most important, 1 being least important



Source

Each of these contribute to the **tenant experience**, are influenced by the **property manager** and can be directly affected by tips in this guide.

01

MISTAKE

MISSING THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM TENANTS

It seems like an improbable oversight, but it is easy to overlook using tenant feedback to its full potential. With so many moving parts in property management and fires to put out in your day-to-day operations, making time to proactively solicit tenant input can become an afterthought. Don't make the mistake of not pulling in 50% of your most valuable resources—your tenants (with your team being the other 50%).

22% of CRE professionals lack confidence in **tenant sentiment** right now. Only **51%** are only somewhat confident.

[Source](#)

As a first-hand source, your tenants can be the key to making smart and skilled business decisions that make sense for your property. As the property manager, you know what your business and your market looks like, but you have the

valuable opportunity to gain more in-depth insight from your consumers. These are the people who at some point already bought into your building and who shopped around then—likely even since then. Sometimes it's as simple as asking customers what they want and starting the evaluation process from there.

In theory, a current tenant should be easier and less costly to keep than a new one is to gain. What's the pulse of your current client base? Are their needs changing and if so, are you able to pivot and adapt? In some cases, yes and in others no—they simply won't fit your value proposition any longer. No matter the case, reaching out will equip you with valuable and actionable information.



How can you leverage your tenants?

01



Conduct Surveys

02



Routine Calls

03



Face to Face interaction

PRO TIP



Look for opportunities to **survey** existing tenants, those who went another route and clients who made a change (think of this as an exit interview).

Suggested topics and questions to talk to clients about

01 Leasing process

- Would you consider our leasing process easy?
- Would you improve any aspect of our leasing process? How?
- Was our staff helpful with explaining the terms and conditions in your lease?
- Do you feel we handled your personal information and payments in a secure manner?

02 Management operations

- Do you consider the property a safe place to live or work?
- Is our property manager available to you during business hours?
- On a scale of 1–10, how hard is it for you to get in touch with your property manager?
- Do you consider management responsive?
- How would you rate your experience in our handling of undesirable situations (elevator entrapment, accident on the property, billing issue, etc.)
- Are you pleased with our parking features?

03 Maintenance experience

- Is maintenance easy to get in touch with?
- On a scale of 1–5, if you've contacted maintenance in the past, what was your experience like?
- Did you receive a suitable response from maintenance?
- Was your work order processed in a timely manner?

04 Interior condition/exterior property condition

- On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate the appearance of this property?
- On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate the overall condition of this property?
- Do you feel safe on the property? In case of emergency, do you feel like you have a good means of summoning help?
- Are you aware of the on-site emergency action plan?
 - » Are you aware of the building's fire alarm protocol?
 - » Active shooter protocol?
 - » Natural disaster protocol?
- On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate the common areas?
- Do you enjoy the amenities we provide onsite?
- What would you improve on this property?
- Would you recommend any other amenities for the property?

CLICK TO

DOWNLOAD
A QUICK TIP SHEET OF
TENANT TOPICS AND
QUESTIONS



Calling upon your tenants takes out unneeded guesswork when it comes to creating the right property experience and reducing wasted time and effort. Utilize the communication guidelines outlined here to get a clear direction on improvements to consider.

A LACK OF PERCEIVED LIFE SAFETY CULTURE



A common property management mistake is to neglect on-site necessities, such as a focus on safety, in pursuit of the sexier, latest and greatest amenities.

Items that impact tenant experience include both the wow factors that set you apart and the basic necessities that we all come to expect but can sometimes neglect as "a given". Both of these play into how you stack up to the competition.

Think about it: someone's experience depends less on tangibles and more on how they feel in their environment. If a tenant doesn't feel safe, are the shiny new amenities going to make a difference?

Tenants rank safety very high on their list of rental property needs, whether commercial office building or residential.

In fact, a property's overall perceived security can make or break the tenants' decision to lease and will affect your ability to retain existing tenants.



Source

A survey recently conducted by **Kingsley Associates** showed that among the **670,000** multifamily renters surveyed, **property security** fell into the **top six renewal** decision factors.

Making the effort to enhance the perceived safety of your property in clear and visible ways is time well spent. This is a perfect area to solicit feedback from your existing tenants, clients who fail to renew and prospects who pass on the opportunity to lease—do you make them feel safe?

“

Making the effort to enhance the perceived safety of your property in clear and visible ways is time well spent.

”

How can I improve my property in clear and visible ways?



01 Hire security guards

Having a physical security presence on the property can help tenants feel safe. Security officers act as a crime deterrent, but keep in mind when hiring security for the premises that you are not hiring actual police officers (unless you hire off duty police through your local department). Not all security personnel receive the same training or provide the same type of service (armed vs unarmed, etc). They can also be expensive, making it impractical for properties with smaller budgets.



03 Install emergency telephones

In addition to your elevator, where emergency telephones are required, emergency phones can be a valuable safety asset in garages, stairwells, hallways, parking lots, pools, common areas, fitness centers and garbage collection spaces. Call boxes in these areas can save lives and deter crime. An emergency response call box or phone will help contact authorities faster than a phone app or smart phone, as a call box is programmed to contact help directly at the touch of a button, automatically providing a fixed, known location (if set up properly) and without the risk of a dropped cell signal.

Furthermore, when using a monitoring service like Kings III, your tenants will be put in touch with professionals who can dispatch help and provide pre-arrival medical instructions, helping to alleviate panic and discomfort.



[Click here](#) to see why old-school emergency phones are more effective than phone apps.





04 Security cameras

The mere presence of video cameras can serve as a crime deterrent and add an extra layer of protection to your security plan. However, it can get expensive to install the number of cameras you need to fully cover your property. Other questions that come into play include: If being selective with location, where on the property should be prioritized? Will the cameras be monitored 24/7? If so, will that be on or offsite? Will the cameras record and if the footage is stored, what is a reasonable time period to store this information and how do we do so securely?



05 Distribute an emergency action plan

It's a common best practice for property managers to create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) to prepare tenants and staff for a potential evacuation. However, these documents often include minimal information and are easily forgotten once created and off the task list. Ensure that your EAP is a breathing document and that it is well communicated to tenants and staff.

Do I need to update my EAP?

- 01** Do I have a standard protocol in place for handling building evacuation?
- 02** When there is a fire, is there a defined priority procedure on how to report it?
- 03** Do I have priority procedures in place for other potential building emergencies?
- 04** Do I have floorplan maps available with routes and evacuation assembly areas established?



Think your EAP could use some work?
Click to see our guide: [Building Your Emergency Action Plan](#)



**HOW CAN YOU SPECIALIZE
LIFE SAFETY AND SECURITY
BASED ON YOUR PROPERTY'S UNIQUE NEEDS?
CLICK TO ACCESS OUR FREE DOWNLOAD**



03

MISTAKE

NOT LEVERAGING YOUR TEAM



Just as it is easy to move full steam ahead without relying on tenant feedback, another common oversight is not pulling in your team early and often, specifically when looking to make changes or improvements. This is a mistake, as your customer facing staff are a gold mine of information with valuable insight. They interact directly with your tenants. Good or bad experiences with staff can change the entire perception of a building, so employee engagement can and should be utilized to impact your tenants' perceptions and to manage your brand.

Take a moment to consider if you are making a proactive effort to keep your staff happy, engaged and properly trained on how to address tenants and tend to issues around the property.

A circular icon containing a network-like symbol with three nodes and connecting lines. It is positioned on the left side of a blue-bordered callout box.

According to a study by [Aon Hewitt](#), there is a direct correlation between **employee engagement** and **revenue growth**. For every percentage increase of engaged workers, revenue also rose by **0.6%**.

[Source](#)

Good or bad experiences with staff can change the entire perception of a building, so employee engagement can and should be utilized to impact your tenants' perceptions and to manage your brand.

A few tips:

01 Start with a successful on-boarding and training program

Take time to talk to your current staff to develop a training program that covers all the necessary bases needed to complete their day to day operations. Learn from employees by encouraging them to engage with you and to voice any concerns. This will give you a deeper perspective on what your team needs to run well.

On days you provide training or onboarding, expect and encourage social bonding among your staff. Studies have shown that when employees get together for training, they are developing a bond to each other and the company they are working for. A friendlier work environment leads to happier and more engaged employees. This leads to better overall interactions with your tenants.

Enable technological advancements within your internal processes

02 to achieve employee empowerment

A common way many properties demonstrate this is via streamlining processes such as work orders with tools and online databases. This contributes to an easy submission process and a quicker response—two things that directly impact tenant experience. Taking the time to address obstacles that may be keeping your staff from doing their jobs effectively will create an efficiency of operations, increase employee satisfaction and improve tenant experience.

03 Empower your employees to solve problems in the moment

Employee empowerment relies on more than just technology. Show your staff you trust them by giving them ownership over their responsibilities and encouraging them to think on the spot. You can help to foster this by holding regular training refresher sessions focused on problem solving—perhaps even by presenting hypothetical or actual scenarios. Publicly recognizing team members for a job well done, with details of the specific interaction, helps to encourage others to follow suit.



Your staff can make or break your tenants' level of satisfaction. Tend to your team and watch your tenants (and your company) reap the benefits.

04

MISTAKE

NO DAMAGE CONTROL AFTER A MISHAP

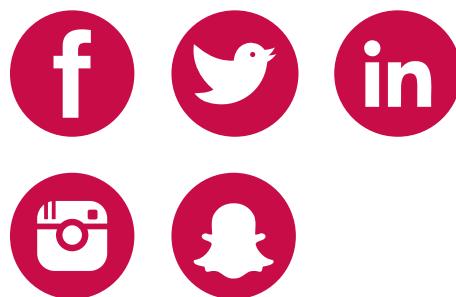


If you make the mistake of not checking in with a tenant after something goes wrong, you very well may lose their trust and confidence. With tools like Google Reviews, Yelp and social media, now more than ever, consumers expect their opinions and issues to be heard and addressed. This is especially important in a property setting. Tenants that run into a situation on site need to know someone is aware and doing everything they can to correct the issue. They need to feel like they are safe and can rely on you and your staff.

Common incidents worthy of follow up:

- 01** Emergencies on the property
- 02** Elevator entrapments
- 03** Power outages
- 04** Fire evacuations
- 05** Appliance malfunctions
- 06** Work orders

Tenants need to feel they are safe and can rely on you and your staff. Proactive follow up when something has gone wrong inspires confidence and instills a care factor that will set you apart.



Because **elevator emergencies** are something we know all too well, that's where we'll do a deeper dive in this next section.



Elevator entrapments

Elevator entrapments are a fairly common (and obviously negative) occurrence that many property managers inadvertently overlook.

 Exactly how often does this occur and how many people does it affect?

In the US: There are **900,000** elevators. Each elevator passenger averages four elevator trips per day, 250 days per year for roughly

18 billion trips annually.

While there is no known stat on the number of elevator entrapments in the United States, with the numbers like the one above, you can imagine that **it's not a matter of if, but when.**

[Source](#)

Numbers like that create many opportunities for elevator entrapments. It's no wonder that, unfortunately, an elevator entrapment is not an unusual occurrence.

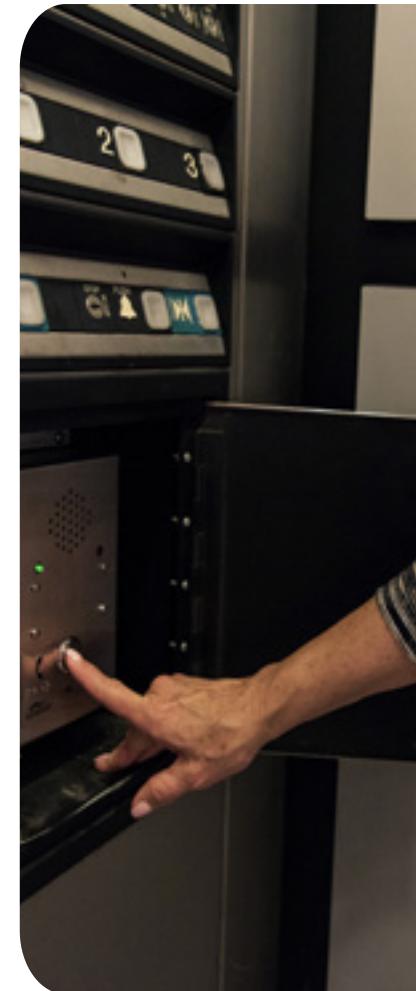


In fact, **Kings III receives nearly 1200 entrapment calls each month.**

Unless it has happened to you, you really don't think about what a negative experience getting stuck in an elevator can be. At best, it's an annoying interruption to your day. From there, the reactions only get worse. Some tenants can become extremely panicked and feel a sense of helplessness. Some will try and pry the elevator door open (potentially worsening their situation) For others, an elevator entrapment can even trigger a pre-existing medical condition, creating a safety issue. How often does this happen? More than you'd think:



Of the nearly 1200 entrapment calls Kings III receives each month, **400+** of them require EMS, police or fire department dispatch.





Needless to say, it is important to have measures in place for when an entrapment happens. Property managers should ensure that their elevators are equipped with a code compliant emergency telephone **answered by a well trained dispatcher**, preferably someone that is only answering emergency calls.

Important response measures to take for elevator entrapments

- 01** Make sure your elevator is up to code and inspected annually.
- 02** Ensure whoever answers calls from your elevator phone is trained on how to react, respond and assist when there is an entrapment.
- 03** During the entrapment, responders should talk with the tenant and let them know help is on the way, giving an estimated time of arrival of the help being dispatched (elevator company, on-site maintenance, EMS, fire department, etc).
- 04** Best Practice: The property manager should retrieve the names and information of those who were stuck in their building's elevator and follow up with them directly.



In June 2018, Kings III conducted a commercial real estate focus group with industry leaders at the BOMA international conference. We found attendees considered it a best practice to **proactively follow up** with every person trapped in an elevator. However, many had trouble doing so—a common complaint was being unaware of every entrapment that occurred on-site.



At Kings III, not only do we dispatch the proper help, we also notify the onsite personnel designated via our client's customized call list so all relevant parties are looped in. This will bring your attention to the entrapment that you may have not otherwise heard about, allowing you to take the appropriate actions to follow up.



According to actual Kings III elevator call data, entrapment duration averages 30 to 45 minutes.
How are your tenants being taken care of during that time?

Kings III dispatchers have assisted thousands of tenants, employees and visitors with entrapments and other emergencies. Our average call lasts around **10 minutes**, but some of our longer entrapment calls have lasted more than **90 minutes**, simply based on what is needed from the individual in the elevator and how they are responding to the situation.

Even in the cases of a prolonged entrapment, **our dispatchers will remain on the line as requested by the entrapped tenant**. This provides a sense of security and calmness and helps to ensure all physical and emotional needs are addressed and handled properly.

Our team includes Advanced Emergency Medical Dispatcher (AEMD) certified, with additional Red Cross CPR and HIPAA certifications to provide callers with the best trained response team **24/7/365**. AEMD is a higher level of certification than is often required in 911 emergency centers. This equips our dispatchers to provide step-by-step medical instructions as callers wait for EMS to arrive.

The level of both initial and ongoing training our operators receive results in unmatched preparation to professionally respond to any emergency call.



The importance of following up after an entrapment

Property managers who do not make time to speak with their tenants after an elevator entrapment and other emergencies are missing important opportunities to make their tenants feel valued. A simple outreach can go a long way. While it may seem like a minor inconvenience, an elevator entrapment can have great implications on your tenant's day. If not acknowledged by management, entrapped passengers may feel undervalued, may think that management is not in the know of what transpires at their buildings or may assume this malfunction is a regular occurrence due to the lack of response. Tenants who feel this way are more likely to leave.

A common problem is the property manager being **unaware that something occurred at all.**

Unless a health emergency that requires EMS occurs, often and quite logically, your elevator maintenance company is dispatched to your property. **Depending on who monitors your elevator phone, you may be looped in to what's happening or you may be none the wiser**, specifically in instances where the entrapment doesn't surpass a certain time threshold,



often determined by the elevator maintenance company. Kings III works closely in partnership with a number of elevator contractors across the US, combining our expertise to bring best in class services to our joint customers.

Setting up proper channels of communication will alleviate this issue. For example, through utilizing a call list that the property manager creates themselves, Kings III notifies a designated property staff member of entrapment calls so that you can follow up as desired.

If your goal is to keep tenants satisfied, you simply cannot afford to not follow up after a negative experience such as an elevator entrapment or other on-site emergency. Be sure you are notified of the entrapments on your property so you are able to sufficiently correct the issue or at least offer an apology.

How should property managers follow up?

01 Apologize

02 Assure tenants you will investigate the situation and a potential solution, if there is one.

03 Show you care. Ask meaningful questions. Find out if there are specific details about the event the tenant wants to relay.

04 Follow up. Small gestures go a long way. This can range from simply checking back in to sending your tenant a card or gift card.



CONCLUSION

The four tenant experience mistakes mentioned in this guide, while common, can be easily addressed. Your goal should be to listen, learn, and initiate proactive measures to reduce vacancy, attract ideal tenants and improve the overall retention rate for long term operational success. We hope this guide has provided a handful of relatable and actionable steps in doing just that.



MORE ABOUT KINGS III

Kings III reduces your risk, liability and costs while providing a concierge level service to your tenants, employees and visitors, helping you to maintain high tenant satisfaction and occupancy in your building. Since 1989, Kings III has been providing complete, compliant and affordable turnkey emergency phone solutions for elevators, stairwells, parking areas and more. We monitor more than 55,000 help phones across the U.S. and our 97%+ customer retention rate speaks for itself.

Our digital recording and storing of all calls provide you with invaluable event details for heading off potential litigation and our smart line seizure technology helps you eliminate costly dedicated emergency phone lines. This coupled with advanced emergency operator training allow us to provide a service your building can be proud of with the level of care your tenants deserve.

Contact Us 



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