

Just where do they live?



Written by: Robert L. Cain

Where do criminals live? Not the Enron-type criminals, but the ordinary, run-of-the-mill robbers and stealers, the drug dealers, the burglars. I will go way out on a limb and venture to guess that better than 99 percent of them don't own their own homes. That means that they live in rental housing.

How do they get to live in rental housing? One way is, assuming they are male, that they move in with girl friends. The girl friend rents the house or apartment, and her criminal boyfriend "crashes" with her. She might even have a real job with references and all, and that's why the landlord rented to her.

Another way is that they sucker some landlord into renting to them.

Of course, being a criminal and all, they don't have much respect for landlords, the place they live, their neighbors, or even themselves. They probably don't pay rent, unless they have to. They probably are far from meticulous about keeping their homes neat and clean. They might walk around with chips on their shoulders being rude and threatening to any neighbor who has the audacity to complain about the wild parties and the riff-raff that shows up after the sun goes down when it can venture out without danger. And they have so little respect for themselves that they feel no shame for all the illegal and sleazy activities they perpetrate and engage in.

Is that the kind of person you want living in your rental property?

No matter how they slithered into living in a rental property, they need to be gone. These miscreants do neither the landlord, other tenants nor the property any good. In fact, allowing them to continue to

(Continued on page 3)

The Four Keys to Doing Business Online



Written by: Bill Ringle

Articles and reports have saturated our collective consciousness with how the Internet is revolutionizing business, I'm told by participants at our "How to Grow

Your Business Using the Internet" seminars. But perhaps what you've read up to this point has been lacking in specific details that would allow you to gauge the depth of your company's web-site for creating the best conditions for doing business. You're not alone.

On the way to the tips, let's first shatter two fundamental misconceptions that commonly distort the perception of doing business on the Internet.

The first fundamental myth is that any company can make big bucks selling over the Internet. It is true that some companies such as Amazon.com, Compaq, and Lands End are making millions of dollars via e-commerce. Hard to find items, computer software and hardware, and high-quality/low-risk items have done very well for a select few companies.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Hundreds of thousands of companies are using the Internet to save money on operational costs and to strengthen relationships with their customers. That's the easier path to follow and the recommended course of action.

For example, look to how Tucker-Anthony (www.tucker-anthony.com) creates an environment for educating their clients about timely investment issues. Nowhere on the web site do they offer or suggest making an online transaction (though they do offer account statement info via a secure logon). Instead, they set a tone and develop an atmosphere for their clients to learn more about investment information and industry trends. You'll even find a lighter-level Wall Street trivia area.

If a monthly newsletter costs \$30,000 per issue to produce and mail to a client base and you can reduce that to a quarterly newsletter that supplements daily updates to a web site, you've improved customer contact (with a rising percentage of your audience) while positively impacting the budget.

Key points to remember: Look first to save money on the Internet before you look to make money from transactions. Your Internet presence can show a healthy return to the bottom line simply by reducing costs from other areas. The second fundamental myth is that doing business online is an all-or-nothing proposition. Either you've got a company web site or you don't. Those that do, win, those that don't lose. This oversimplification of the issue can cause damage to your company's reputation on three fronts: failure to improve the content, failure to take advantage of new technologies, and/or failure to address the culture changes within your organization.

On the Internet, content is king; however, nowhere else is its reign so short! In my presentations, I challenge participants to think in terms of information "freshness, expiration dates", and "half-lives" when submitting articles for their webmasters/content teams to post. Without this dimension, a site that upon its launch seemed vibrant and cutting edge soon becomes another "cobweb" site with a diminishing audience.

Keep abreast of technologies and adopt the ones that support your mission and goals. If a server-side Java applet allows you to add an amortization calculator to your site and that fits with your goals, great. However, avoid the trap of becoming technology-driven rather than outcome driven. Technology is a wonderful servant, but a horrible master, in spite of what the IT journals claim.

Having a "checklist mentality" about your company web site misses an important force for transforming your business internally, which is developing new processes for improving collaboration, productivity, and learning. In my experience with corporations, it takes groups anywhere from 3 to 12 months to adopt a new system and take their corporate consciousness thinking to the next level.

Key points to remember: Business web site development is a constant, iterative process. You must be vigilant to stay on top of new information in your industry as well as new technologies that will serve your purposes. Always look at your Internet/intranet offerings from the perspective of your target audience, whether

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President's Message:

Last month, Alice and I joined colleagues from the DMAA, PMAMM, and PMAWM in representing Michigan at the National Apartment Association Capital Conference in Washington D.C. We met with Michigan's legislators to discuss issues impacting rental housing. Our meetings were brief, but effective. The next step will be for all of us to make an effort to strengthen the relationship with our congressional leaders through grassroots efforts and correspondence in order to provide a platform for our success in the future.

"What can I do" you ask? There are opportunities to get involved with our legislative committee. You don't need any experience...just an interest in making a difference. Our committee meets monthly to discuss local, state, and federal issues that impact our association. They also represent the interests of our members when they meet with elected officials. When I first became involved, I had no idea what to expect. Several years later, I had the opportunity to discuss national industry issues with the staff of Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow. Anyone can get involved!

You may also get involved by supporting our Political Action Committee (PAC) in raising money to support legislators who are sensitive to rental housing issues. There are several political items being considered that will impact our industry and livelihood in the near future (please see the article in this newsletter about NAA Hill visits). We obtain our legislators support by donating PAC funds toward their campaigns. It is imperative for our elected officials to support our associations' positions to ensure our success. If it were not for the PAC contributions from rental housing professionals, members of congress could choose to ratify policies and mandates that would negatively impact our business and livelihood. You will hear more about the PAC during future general membership meetings and association events. Please consider a donation...large or small...all is welcomed!

We have shaken off this brutal winter and are enjoying the beginning of Spring! We encourage you to support our associate members, especially those who will improve your curb appeal, leasing efforts, tenant screening, laundry equipment, construction upgrades, and asphalt/concrete repair! A complete list of our associates is available on our website.

Lastly, please be sure to become a member of our Facebook page. We post event announcements, photos, and general information weekly. Our group has grown dramatically, but we have some work to do to get to our goal of 500 members by the end of June. Please help by inviting others to join us!

I encourage you to contact any member of our board of directors if you have any feedback, questions or comments. Have a safe Spring!

By: George Markley

EO Message

Starting in 2011, Senator Rick Jones developed a Task Force to design legislation that will help Michigan navigate through the Medical Marijuana Law that passed in 2009. The law as originally passed gave little specific direction for all those trying to enforce marijuana use and distribution for strictly medical purposes. Rental housing has its share of issues with this new law.

The Property Management Association of Michigan has been asked to help on this task force so that the rental housing issues also get solved. As you all work through your processes in your business and problems arise, please inform either myself, our lobbyist Mia McNeil or our state association of your issue. (see below for contact information) As the task force proceeds through this year, PMAM is excited to represent the rental housing industry in crafting legislation for **medical** marijuana use.



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Front page continued:

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live in a rental property shows disrespect for good tenants and the property investment.

I have heard more than one landlord say with pride that they want to respect the "privacy" of their tenants. At the expense of what? Can you respect their privacy when they don't, won't, or can't pay the rent? Will you respect their privacy when they trash the property? Will you respect their privacy when they steal from or assault neighbors, possibly your other tenants?

How about the "roommate" of a tenant who is living in a property without an approved rental application? This is the same individual whom a landlord would turn down flat if he tried to rent on his own. But this same landlord allows him to live with his girl friend? Does that mean, just because he's not a "real" tenant, that he will be a good little boy and not trash the place or throw wild parties? Should a landlord respect his "privacy"?

Go ahead if you want to, but as for me, my investments are more important than the privacy of a criminal, especially one who has not earned the right to live in my property anyway.

Making a profit on your investments means you have to take and keep control of them. So first of all, you don't rent to people who don't pass muster. Second, you get rid of tenants as soon as they show signs of being bad neighbors or someone who might be hauled off to jail at any moment (thus moving without notice). Third, you demand that your tenants not allow their "friends" to move in with them without your approval. And your approval isn't easy to get.

Where do criminals live? Not in your rental property.

Copyright© 2006, Cain Publications, Inc. All right reserved. Robert Cain has been publishing information, giving speeches and putting on seminars and workshops for landlords on how to buy, rent and manage property more effectively for over 15 years. For additional information about Robert's Keynotes and seminars, contact contact the FrogPond at 800.704.FROG(3764) or email susie@FrogPond.com

(Continued from page 1)

they are external or internal.

Now that you've sidestepped the two biggest potholes on the business lane of the Information Superhighway, let's discuss four measures of success for a company web site.

1) Information rich. Remember King Content? Well, here is where you build the palace. Your visitors want information that is timely, accurate, well-written, and substantial. Look at Dean Witter's section on news and commentary (www.deanwitter.com/news/index.html) for a positive example. Remember that your well-informed opinions are a key differentiator: online prospects and clients want both the basis and conclusions of your analysis to compare against their own judgments. Whether you are a partner with a full-service house or run a specialty firm, you want visitors to your site to leave with the insight that you offer information that can be found nowhere else.

2) Interactive content. Static web pages are text-based and they do not change from one view to another. Interactive content takes advantage of special HTML codes on the server software to display different sets of information under different conditions. A simple example is to have a countdown timer to a special event. (Hint: the number of days until Y2K slightly less popular than the visitor counter, but just as boring. Better: the number of consecutive days that the Dow has closed up, or the number of days left to apply for a special tax deadline.) When sites become information rich, a keyword search engine becomes a necessity for navigation. Even better interactive content really endeavors to involve the visitor, such as the interactive quiz at Prudential on your investment personality (www.prusec.com/quiz.htm). In addition to being well-designed and implemented, it provides useful feedback that builds the user's confidence in the company.

3) Individualized experiences. Internet software provides the ability to remember each individual who visits a web site, remember their preferences, interests, and goals, and offer the most relevant news, products, and services upon each return visit. Are you taking advantage of that yet? It's taking the interactive ability to look up stock quotes to the next level where a user profile is stored so that upon each visit the current share values as well as overall portfolio value is automatically calculated. Visit the Excite web site and create a personal page for a quick sample (www.excite.com). Individualized experiences are one of the fastest ways to build brand loyalty online.

4) Integration with the business. By now you've realized that a web site cannot succeed at the highest levels if it is isolated within a company, but you'd be surprised at how many people I come in contact with through my seminars and consulting projects that are still grappling with this point. It is critical that a company web site have ongoing input and interaction from all departments, from front-line sales to senior management. Your IT group may be responsible for managing and maintaining the site, but educating the rest of the company on the opportunities and capabilities is a larger responsibility that can leverage your technology investment

Copyright© 2002, Bill Ringle. All right reserved. Bill Ringle, President, Star Communications Group, is America's Internet Business Coach. He advises corporate executives who want to make better decisions about technology and small business owners who want to use the Internet to grow their business. Clients include MetLife, DuPont, Apple Computer, Pitney Bowes, Women in Communications, DaraTech, PRODN,

CAMA, the National Speakers Association, University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University. He is the author of TechEdge, Using Computers to Present and Persuade. To contact Bill about his availability to speak to your group, contact the FrogPond at 800.704.FROG(3764) or email susie@FrogPond.com

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What's new at NAA (all information available at naahq.org):



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- **NEW — FREE ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE**
- **Coming soon....student rental version for more than 4 leases.**

Go to www.naahq.org for more information.

NAA Advocacy



Join Our Network

NAA's Grassroots Program helps industry members become more politically active and advocate for rental housing legislative priorities. As a Grassroots Program participant, you pledge to ad-

vocate the pro-rental housing legislative agenda to your elected officials. After you join, you will receive information about our priorities, where your elected officials stand, how to get more involved and alerts when action is needed.

www.naahq.org/governmentaffairs/naaadvocracy/grassroots/Pages/default.aspx



Listen Up!

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The NAAPAC seeks to support Congressional candidates who represent good government and understand the needs and concerns of the multifamily housing industry. NAAPAC strives to educate Congress about the apartment industry and guarantees that no decision is made that will affect the industry, good or bad, until its voice is heard.

What is NAAPAC?

NAAPAC is the voluntary, non-partisan political action committee of the National Apartment Association. It is the only federal political action committee solely dedicated to protecting and promoting the multi-family industry. Formed with the mission of promoting the involvement of NAA member companies and individuals in the political process, NAAPAC solicits voluntary contributions from individual members across the country, aggregates their political strength and supports the campaigns of national candidates who are supportive of a pro-apartment, pro-business legislative agenda.

What forms of payment does NAAPAC accept?

NAAPAC can accept personal checks, credit cards and cash (NAAPAC cannot accept cash contributions in excess of \$100 from an individual). NAAPAC can also accept checks, credit cards and cash from unincorporated partnerships and sole proprietorships. In addition, NAAPAC contributions can be made online. NAAPAC contributions can be made in full or in monthly/quarterly installments.

Why is NAAPAC important to the multi-family industry?

NAAPAC is important to NAA because, according to the Federal Election Campaign Act, trade associations such as NAA are prohibited from using their general treasury funds (membership dues or other revenue) to make contributions or expenditures in connection with federal elections. NAAPAC is the only vehicle through which NAA and its members may participate together in the political process via contributions and expenditures on behalf of federal candidates.

To contribute go to: <http://www.naahq.org/governmentaffairs/naaadvocracy/NAAPAC/Pages/default.aspx>

Advocacy on Capitol Hill:

WASHTENAW AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION LEADERS TAKE CONCERNS DIRECTLY TO CAPITOL HILL

*Issues Cover Ensuring Access to Federally Backed Capital,
Balancing America's Housing Policy and Creating Energy
Efficiency Incentives*

ANN ARBOR, MI – Leaders of the Washtenaw Area Apartment Association in Ann Arbor, Michigan met with Rep. Mike Rogers (R - 8th District), and staff members for U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan), Rep. Tim Walberg (R - 7th District), and Rep. Dave Camp (R - 4th District) in Washington D.C. on Wednesday, March 16 to discuss the critical need for Congress to ensure an ongoing federally backed guarantee for apartment sector mortgages. This is especially timely as Congress begins to overhaul the nation's housing system.

The meetings, which took place during the National Apartment Association's (NAA) annual Capitol Conference, also urged Congressional action to:

- Create apartment-specific incentives to



increase energy efficiency for new and existing properties as part of job creation initiatives focusing on energy consumption,

- Establish policies that create balanced incentives for Americans to choose the housing best meeting their needs and also reject additional homeownership subsidies as unnecessary.



"During our meetings, we advocated for a new paradigm for housing recognizing that not all Americans should be, or want to be, homeowners and that rental housing plays a critical role in meeting the nation's housing needs," said George Markley, President of the Washtenaw Area Apartment Association.


"For more than a decade, our members have gone to Capitol Hill to urge members of Congress to recognize the critical role of apartments in providing shelter to a third of all Americans," said Douglas S. Culkin, CAE, NAA President.

"With the single-family housing meltdown, Congress is now realizing that housing is shelter – not an investment – and recognizing that renting is preferable to owning for many people. One noted researcher predicts that to meet growing demand, half of all new homes built between 2005 and 2030 will need to be rental units. Yet, new construction all but halted during the recession, which could lead to an apartment shortage as early as 2012," Culkin said.

"The apartment sector cannot meet this demand without reliable access to capital, which is why we are urging lawmakers to retain a federally backed guarantee for apartment properties," said Doug Bibby, president of the National Multi Housing Council. "History has made it clear that the private sector cannot fully meet our industry's capital needs, even in healthy economic times."

"Such a guarantee poses no risk to taxpayers," explained Bibby, "because in stark contrast to the Government-Sponsored Enterprises' (GSEs) single-family programs, their multi-family programs have default rates of less than one percent, and they actually produce net revenue for the government – even during the historic downturn. Quite simply, the GSEs' multifamily programs are not broken, and could in fact serve as a model for reforms in the single-family market."

The Washtenaw Area Apartment Association represents leading firms participating in the multi-family rental housing industry in the counties of Washtenaw, Livingston, Monroe and Lenawee. Its membership is engaged in all aspects of the development and operation of apartment communities, including ownership, construction, finance and management. Through its affiliation with the National Apartment Association, the Washtenaw Area Apartment Association participates in the federal legislative program of NAA and the National Multi Housing Council.


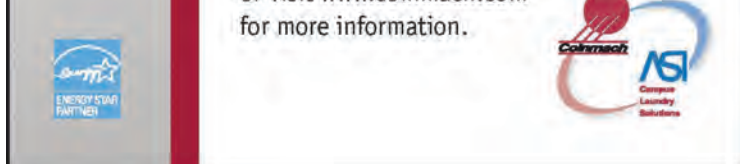


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Mia McNeil, lobbyist for the Property Management Association from Kelley Cawthorne presented an overview of what is happening in Lansing with the recent election results and the proposed Snyder Budget recommendations.

She went on to inform the membership of the status of the proactive legislation introduced in the House and Senate to help the rental housing industry with specific eviction problems.



Greg Brown, Director of Government Affairs for the National Apartment Association gave a power point presentation about what NAA does, how they are involved in legislation at the national level and what they can do for us at the state and local level. He explained the PAC (Political Action Committees) and how they help get legislation that is pro-rental housing passed at all levels of government.

Thank you for coming Greg

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General Membership Events Coming up

April 14

General Membership Lunch with Phil Power
President and Founder of The Center for Michigan and pre-
vious owner and creator of Home Town Communications

Network which included the
Observer & Eccentric newspapers

Cost: \$20 at Weber's Inn

Sponsor for Meeting: First Class Services

May 13

Tiger Ball Game Bus Trip with Fireworks

June 3

Annual Golf Outing at The Links of Whitmore Lake

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Events:

APRIL:



5 - Bed Bugs - Instructor: Gary Offenbacher, Continental Management. Education on how to work through the realities of Bed Bugs and treatment options. Cleary University, class time 9 to 12, Cost: \$55/\$85.

14 - General Membership Lunch at Weber's Inn, Cost: \$20. Guest Speaker: Phil Power. Topic: Who are those involved in the Center for



Michigan think tank and what are they working on to help rejuvenate Michigan?

15 - Fair Housing with Sherre Helmer, Cleary University, \$59/\$89, class time is 9 to 12.

27 - Mastering Leasing Skills with Bonus Topic—Advanced Closing Techniques....Instructor: Kathy Banker, President LeaseUp. Cleary University, 9 to 12, Cost: \$49/\$79.

MAY:



13 - Friday night bus trip to the Tiger Game Outing, with fireworks....Sign up now. Bus trip, pizza and drinks on the bus and ticket to the game all included.



17 - Legal Tuesday with Jim Fink and Karen Valvo, attorneys at Fink and Valvo ...Topics to be announced after survey of members. Cleary University, Ann Arbor.

25 - Anne Sadovsky

26 - Action Leasing: Lease Better, Faster, Higher, Further... Apartment Skill Builder Series webinar. Cost: \$99 per computer.

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