

Make Fear Your Friend, Not Your Foe

By: Jay Gubrud

You have probably noticed how much fear there has been lately. Fear is good, it keeps you out of harms way. It has allowed the human species to survive threats throughout time and currently today. However most Americans have to deal with fear that isn't life threatening. But the fear is just as real. We fear failure, rejection, the unknown, loss, etc. Fear motivates us. The question is, is fear your servant or your master? I believe it should be your servant, not your master. In a servant role, it can be helpful. If it becomes your master, it can be devastating.



(Continued on page 3)

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Partner News

February 5, 2009

January '09 Stats for www.Mldias.com:

- * 857 properties
- * 15,881 units
- * 20,320 property views
- * 105 web-leads

Tips for Marketing Success with online Video

By: Steve Lefkovits, Executive Producer
Joshua Tree Internet Media, LLC,
Phone 510-444-2988

1. Tell a story. Make sure you include narrative elements to tie the video together and keep viewers interested. A video composed of shots without a story will show what the unit looks like, but it won't let viewers know why they should live there.
2. Emphasize the selling points. If a property is most appealing because of its central location, don't make the focus of the video about the pool and the gym. Try to make the video like a tour with a good leasing agent, leading the viewers around the property, emphasizing the key selling points while playing down weaknesses.
3. Keep it short and sweet. Internet videos should be between 1.5 and 2.5 minutes in length. If a video goes for more than a few minutes viewers will get bored and go somewhere else.
4. Always include contact info in the video. Do this even if the contact info is listed in other places around the video. YouTube gives you the ability to embed a video in other sites and play it there. This feature helps get a video in front of a lots of people, but it won't do much good if someone can't find you or the property's website.
5. Spread the word. Post a link or embed the video wherever the unit is listed online. Include the link on an Internet Listing Site, or on Craigslist and other free listing services.



YouTube also gives viewers the ability to share the video with others and tags allow people to search for specific topics and find related videos.

Now go watch examples of good videos. Our friends at [Capture the Market](#) always do a great job creating compelling apartment marketing videos and have some good ones posted on [their YouTube page](#).

WHY VIDEO?

- 6 out of 10 Internet users watch an online video at least once a week. The average apartment renter is already using online tools to find their next place.
- Video is more compelling than pictures. Online video give potential renters a feel for the apartment, helping to narrow down the leads to the most qualified and interested.
- It's cheap and easy to use. Thanks to sites like YouTube, you can create a powerful video using only a digital camera and basic software that can be viewed by thousands of people, or hire a professional firm to create and market a video for you relatively inexpensively.

Steve Lefkovits is the producer of the Apartment Internet Marketing Conference, the industry's leading event that teaches how to market online. April 29 - May 1, 2009 www.aimconf.com.

WA3 Calendar Briefs:

- March 17 - General Membership Breakfast with Pronto Pest's Canine Bed Bug detector
- March 27 - Comprehensive Bed Bug Class at Cleary University



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Deadline:

15th of the month for next month's publication.
Submit all materials to
Alice Ehn, Executive Officer

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- Sue Horner, Timberland Partners, Legislative Committee representative for PMAM

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President's Message:

By Kelly O'Donnell

February of this year has already proven to be an exciting month at the Association. February 4 was Capital Day in Lansing. As usual, it was quite exciting to see our government in action as well as meet with our local representatives. In addition to Alice and I spending the day there, we also had Paula Rote-Tigani and Kristine Siemieniak join us. (see photos this page) This was a first time experience for them. I highly encourage all of our members to consider attending next year. The knowledge gained from it helps paint the whole picture of what our association does locally and at the state level. With the help of our local's and the state we have been successful in getting our goals accomplished. One of them was the recent passage of Public Act 408 signed by the Governor on January 5, 2009 regarding periodic inspections of rental housing. Without all of us voicing our concerns, this may never have happened. And now we need to become vocal at the local level to convince the municipalities that extending the inspection cycle in some instances makes sense for local units of government.



In addition to our local and state associations, we are also members of the National Apartment Association. Alice and I will be traveling to Washington DC at the beginning of March to participate in their Capital Conference. This is when the circle becomes complete – not only do our voices get heard locally and at the state level but we can also impact our profession at the national level. Last year was my first year attending and it was amazing to see what a difference we can all make. I am very much looking forward to attending it again.

Don't forget we have several upcoming events at the association and I look forward to seeing all of you attend.

EO Message

By: Alice J. Ehn

As Kelly said above, the Property Management Association of Michigan (PMAM) hosted the Capitol Day in Lansing where we were invited to visit with our local legislators and then attend (and invite the legislators) to a reception from 4 to 6 pm in Lansing. Approximately 70 legislators responded as able to attend. It was a really well run event and a good opportunity for us to meet all the new legislators that were voted into office in November. We promised to work with all of them and be a resource for upcoming legislation that affects the rental housing industry.

To that vain, there are two pieces of legislation that have been introduced already that the PMAM Legislative Committee (and your local committee) are keeping an eye on.

First is a Domestic Violence Bill sponsored by Senator Garcia that would allow you to let someone out of their lease if their life is in danger due to domestic violence with all the necessary controls for your business. It is SB 185.

The second bill is HB 4251 that would require a landlord or owner of rental property to provide a dumpster (large movable container of sufficient size) at the time of eviction for holding all the ex-tenants stuff that previously has been put to the curb. It further requires the landlord to assure the safe and proper disposal of all hazardous waste and medical waste that is a result of the eviction. This bill has been sent to the local legislative committee for comment

Rest assured, Susan Horner with Timberland Partners (your local representative on the PMAM legislative committee) and I are helping the rest of the legislative staff and David Gregory, the PMAM lobbyist from Kelly Cawthorne are working with your State Legislators to protect your interests.



Fear Con't :

Hard economic times accentuate this issue. It becomes much easier to get overwhelmed with fear and let it drive you, especially if you pay too much attention to the media. I have had to be conscious of the amount of news I watch, it can bring you down because it is full of negative stories. Granted, you have to be honest and real about the economic situation, but it can be a self fulfilling prophecy if you are not careful.

I was watching the show Chopped on The Cooking Channel. It is a competition where they start out with four chefs and one is eliminated after preparing each dish. One of the contestants was making a complicated sandwich with many ingredients and only had thirty minutes. He was falling behind part way through and got scared that he wouldn't finish in time. As a result, the fear caused him to make mistakes which got him eliminated. The judges found two causes for his failure. First, his dish was too complicated for the amount of time he had. Second, his fear caused him to make mistakes. I thought it was a powerful conclusion. The good fear drove him to be competitive, while the bad fear caused him to fail.

Bad fear destroys and fragments your focus. It puts blinders on and interferes with creativity and initiative. It propels you to less than desirable outcomes and makes you feel helpless. Here are just a few activities that breed bad fear.

- Each day watch the news at least 2 hours and read only the headlines of at least 4 major new sources.
- Only look out for yourself.
- Tell people what they are doing wrong without balancing it with the positive.
- Start each day with gloom and believe it can't get any better.
- Under any circumstances, never ask for help from a friend, boss or doctor.
- Gossip with coworkers and cashiers about how bad things are and how they will get worse.
- Believe that all your struggles are someone else's fault and are in vain.
- Tolerate people or situations in your life that are detrimental.
- Don't learn anything from this economic challenge or any of the events leading up to it.
- Isolate yourself from coworkers and friends.
- Make sure you are not adding value to your customers or company.
- Tolerate suffering each day because you are unwilling to make a tough decision and make the sacrifice.
- Keep telling yourself that there is no budget so you cannot do anything.
- Seek out reasons that something cannot be done rather than finding a way to make it happen.
- Continue being a slave to your routine and don't try anything new in your daily activity.
- Keep all your feelings to yourself, never let others see your suffering or imperfections.

Good fear helps you focus. It propels you toward a positive outcome. Here are some activities that cost nothing or very little that will make fear your servant.

- Kindly listen to others who are suffering (this could also be a client or vendor) and offer

your support. Just ask questions and listen. If it is personal only offer advice if they ask for it.

- Give others positive feedback, this is especially important during tough times.
- Call your competitor and offer to meet over coffee or a beer.
- Attend an industry event, such as an association meeting and make sure to meet two new people.
- Go to the gym or take a walk over your lunch hour.
- Offer to help a person or charity.
- Check in with someone you saw at a convention but never followed up with.
- Partner with a business associate and trade contacts or resources.
- Start each morning by appreciating all that you have.
- Do something you have really wanted to but have put up roadblocks to in the past.
- Organize a gathering of co-workers, friends or family and have each person bring something.
- Reevaluate your priorities at work, home and in your relationships.
- Make hard decisions that are beneficial in the long run.
- Hang out in a coffee shop, book store or library.
- Go to the movies.
- Go to your place of worship.
- Find 5 minutes of complete silence and see what happens.
- Read a book.
- Locate and crank up your favorite music.
- Attend a support group.
- Call a friend you have not talked to in a while but think about often.
- Redefine who you are and what is important to you.
- Accept and take responsibility for where you are at, personally or professionally.

Know that life is not always fair, but there are ways to look at it more positively!

About Jay Gubrud: *Because of his experience in a variety of industries, Jay Gubrud brings a fresh and diverse perspective. For over 13 years, Jay has helped people enhance their performance and improve their businesses. His theme of cars and driving is something everybody can relate to. As a professional speaker, Jay has exciting new ideas in his interactive programs! Attendees will walk away energized, educated and entertained. Don't settle for the same old ideas that are being used in your industry.*



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AIMS Updates from NAA/NMHC:

Stimulus Bill Supports Rental Housing, Rejects Overly Generous Homeownership Incentives

On Tuesday, President Obama signed into law the \$787 billion economic stimulus package. Once again, the measure represents a tremendous victory for the apartment industry and for NAA/NMHC's efforts to advocate a more balanced housing policy. The measure includes several provisions that may be helpful to apartment firms related to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program (see below), energy efficiency incentives, cancellation of debt (see below), bonus depreciation and more.

The final legislation stripped out a \$15,000 homebuyer tax credit for all purchasers that was included in the Senate version. Instead, the measure includes an \$8,000 tax credit limited to first-time homebuyers making less than \$95,000 (\$170,000 for joint filers). It expires on December 1.

While we realize that housing is a big problem and must be fixed, we successfully convinced lawmakers that the Senate tax proposal was too costly and was unlikely to be successful. In round-the-clock communications with lawmakers and their key staff contacts, we encouraged Congress to focus on appropriating money to put people to work on infrastructure and other economic needs; helping people who have lost their jobs so they can pay their rent; helping LIHTC properties; and providing money to states to forestall tax increases. An NAA/NMHC-produced chart identifying the primary provisions of interest to apartment firms is available at www.naahq.org/governmentaffairs/Pages/default.aspx.

FHA Makes Permanent Financing More Available for Apartments

In response to the freeze in the capital markets, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) has issued temporary regulations making it easier for apartment owners to access the FHA for permanent mortgage financing. Traditionally, FHA 223(f) loans have been unavailable to properties that have been constructed or rehabilitated within three years of applying for FHA insurance. Last week, the FHA said it has instituted a six-month waiver of this Three-Year Rule.

NAA/NMHC applaud this action as it will open up new lines of credit for apartment firms and provide an exit strategy for banks and other lenders that have outstanding construction debt or bridge financing on such properties

E-Verify.

NAA/NMHC continue to oppose efforts to require firms to participate in the federal government's flawed Internet-based screening system known as E-Verify. We maintain that the system, designed to help firms determine whether employees are legally eligible to work in the U.S., is too prone to error to be reliable, raises privacy and discrimination concerns and relies on identification documents that remain prone to alteration and theft. The final version of the economic stimulus legislation (H.R. 1) signed into law this week left out a highly controversial provision approved by the House that would have mandated E-Verify for employers that receive federal contracting funds made available under the stimulus plan.

In related news, on January 30 the Department of Homeland Security announced an "action directive" by Secretary Janet Napolitano to review the Department's immigration programs and policies, including E-Verify. The directive specifically noted the need to address the prevalence and causes of the program's errors as well as potential reforms to the program's structure.

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MICHIGAN'S FOURTH QUARTER 2008 INSIGHT INTO MULTIFAMILY APPLICANT RISK INDEX

By: Jay Harris, Vice President of Business Services,
First Advantage SafeRent

The Multifamily Applicant Risk Index (MAR Index) is published quarterly by First Advantage SafeRent and is based on traffic credit quality scores from their statistical screening model. This quarterly report provides property owners and managers in Michigan with a benchmark with which to compare their portfolio's performance. The fourth quarter national MAR Index, including studios, one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom units, was 99.

Here is how Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI performed this quarter compared to last year:

- Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI: 4Q08 MAR Index = 92
- Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI: 4Q07 MAR Index = 89

The MAR Index is derived from First Advantage SafeRent's Statistical Screening Model—the multifamily industry's only screening model that is both empirically derived and statistically validated. With this unique applicant risk index, property managers and owners are able to compare their applicant credit quality trends with that of the average MAR Index trends. This comparison indicates whether their portfolio is performing above, below or at market levels with respect to attracting and securing applicants with higher credit quality and an increased likelihood of fulfilling their lease.

The Multifamily Applicant Risk Index (MAR Index) provides trends of national and regional traffic credit quality scores whereby

a lower index value indicates an applicant pool with a higher risk of not fulfilling lease obligations. A MAR Index value of 100 indicates that market conditions are equal to the national mean for the index's base period of 2004. A MAR Index value greater than 100 indicates market conditions with reduced average risk of default relative to the index's base period mean. A value less than 100 indicates market conditions with increased average risk of default relative to the index's base period mean.

The screening model was developed from historical resident lease performance data to specifically evaluate the potential risk of a resident's future lease performance. The model generates scores for each applicant indicating the relative risk of the applicant not fulfilling lease obligations.

Data is also available at the property and sub-market level from Property Performance Analytics. For more information visit www.FADVSafeRent.com/PPA.

About First Advantage SafeRent

First Advantage SafeRent, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of First Advantage Corporation, is the nation's leading and most innovative provider of screening and risk management services to the multifamily housing industry. Through its offices in Rockville, Md., and support offices across the nation, First Advantage SafeRent offers a single source for resident screening services, renters insurance programs, automated lease and document generation, and property performance evaluation tools. More than 39,000 properties, representing over 6 million apartment homes, rely on First Advantage SafeRent every day to assist them in screening residents to meet their community standards and maximize profitability. First Advantage SafeRent leads the industry in innovations and enhancements designed to make the decision process faster, easier and more accurate. For more information, visit www.FADVSafeRent.com.



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Events:

MARCH:

 **3 - NALP Continued** - Rental Policies and Procedures in the AM and Legal Aspects PM. All classes can be taken as stand alone classes for \$85 per class at the member rate. Classes are held at Hidden Valley Clubhouse off of State Street.

5 - NALP Final Class - Telephone Presentations

 **5 - Product and Service Council Meeting** - 4PM Golfside Lake Apartments Clubhouse

8 thru 11 - NAA Capitol Conference in Washington DC.

 **12 - Livingston County Manager's Only** at Oakbrooke Apartments in Howell.

 **17 - General Membership Breakfast** at Weber's, Guest Speaker: Pronto Pests with a Canine Bed Bug Detector. Cost: \$20 per person.

 **16 thru 20 - CAM Certified Apartment Manager Designation Class** - One full week of information and instruction. No longer will it take you a full year to get the information.

 **25 - HVAC Hands On Repair for Maintenance** - Location to be announced. Instructor: Jeff Hazel, Facilities Director from Associated Estates for Michigan, Indiana and Florida.

 **27 - Science and Management of Bed Bugs.** Instructor: Gary Offenbacher from Continental Management. Location: Cleary University off of Plymouth Rd. Class time from 9 to noon. Cost: \$45 per person member rate.

APRIL:

 **8 and 9 - CPO Certified Pool Operator Class** with Gill Daws, Full day both days

16 - Make Ready or Fake Ready for Maintenance, Can you tell the difference? Location: A two bedroom Apartment at Harbor House. Cost: \$59 if register by March 4th, \$69 after that date. Nonmember rate is \$94/\$104. Time: 9 AM until 4 PM, lunch included.

 **21 - General Membership Breakfast** at Weber's Inn. Guest Speaker: Leah Brewer from Full House Marketing. Topic: Get Out of Your Rut and into a New Groove...Leah will get you ready for your next leasing season. 8:30 am Cost: \$20 per person

MAY:

13 - Legal Wednesday with Jim Fink and Karen Valvo

19 - General Membership Breakfast at Weber's Inn with David Gregory, Lobbyist for PMAM.

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