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Question of the Month: Curb appeal: Is your property manager going the extra mile for your property?

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Property managers wear many different hats and so their responsibilities may range from monitoring oil deliveries and usage to overseeing the rental process. A good property manager is very organized and is able to manage his or her time effectively to address multiple day-to-day items. One of the primary concerns of a property manager is their property's curb appeal. Property managers normally visit their respective properties once or twice a week. During this visit it is good practice to walk the property's exterior, stairways, hallways, and other common areas like the lobby or laundry room. This routine helps the manager maintain a good understanding of the condition and up-keep of the property. In my opinion curb appeal is not just the exterior appearance of the property, but also includes the appearance of common areas that a prospective buyer will see when first visiting the property. There are five major areas that make up the curb appeal presence of a building. They are the exterior entrance or courtyard, the lobby area, the mailboxes, the elevator, and the laundry room.

The appearance of the building's entrance is the most influential of the common areas. The courtyard or entrance is the first thing that a prospective buyer will see when driving by or visiting the property. Therefore, this area is typically addressed first at most properties. It is good practice to have your staff start every day by walking the grounds and doing a quick clean up. A well-manicured lawn also helps point out small debris that may have been left behind. This daily clean up each morning ensures that the property looks well maintained even before the Superintendent starts his day.

The lobby area of the building is very important because a prospective buyer will get a sense of how well the building is kept in this space. Simple procedures like daily window cleaning in the lobby area can make a big difference. The polishing of the door hardware or frames on a weekly or bi-weekly basis gives the building a more luxurious feel to it. As the first point of entrance for the building the lobby will have a lot of traffic in the mornings and evenings. Therefore, keeping the floors well swept and clear of debris will help keep the area looking great. The building should be mopped a minimum of two times a week to consistently keep a good appearance.

The mailboxes help tell the story of a building. If the mailboxes are cleaned and polished it speaks volumes of the building staff's eye for detail. In some instances residents take it upon themselves to write their unit numbers or names on the mailboxes. Maintaining a good system for new move ins and move outs can help eliminate this practice. For example, when a new resident is moving in and mailbox keys are being exchanged this could be the perfect opportunity to label the mailbox with the new resident's name. Also, implementing fines for unit owners that take these actions after being warned can deter future offenders.

An area of which to maintain a strong awareness would be an elevator if they are present in the

building. Such a small, confined space could become quite uncomfortable if the area is not kept clean. Superintendents should be instructed to look after elevators along with the lobby area, especially because in these areas, examples like a resident spilling liquid on the floor can cause safety issues. Anything done to prevent potential accidents can help eliminate many headaches. Finally, the laundry room should be tidy and in proper working condition. If it is allowed to deteriorate, it could significantly decrease the income that the laundry room is bringing to the building. Most people would not want to wash their laundry in a place that is not clean or inviting. An annual paint job to keep the room looking fresh can make quite the difference. Weekly cleaning of the machines will help the machines run more efficiently and keep the room looking up to par. As a property management company we are constantly working with owners to help them make well-informed decisions regarding all concerns. At Milio Realty Corp. our goal is to guide our owners in the most economical and energy efficient direction. We pride ourselves on over 30 years of self-management experience and in turn we use this experience to help our clients make the best decision.

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