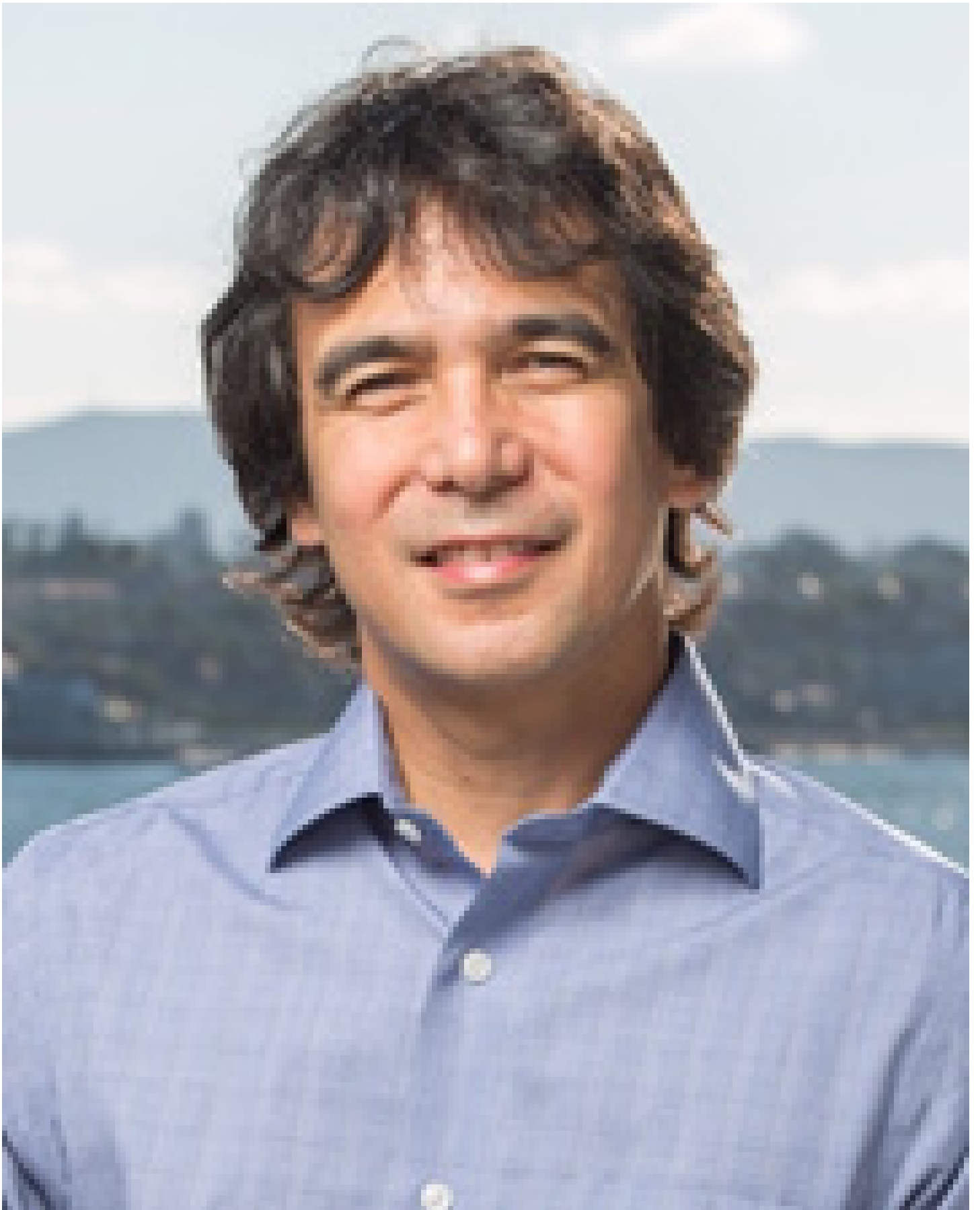




Simple ways to future-proof your property management business - by Chris Ulep

November 08, 2022 - Owners Developers & Managers



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When the word recession gets thrown around, you may worry about your financial security. The economy goes through cycles, and while these cycles are often unpredictable, the threat of recession looms heavily on your ability to plan ahead. Thanks to some much-needed cloud-based services, a few simple moves can go a long way toward future-proofing your property management business.

Reassess your tech

A smart way to combat uncertainty is using reliable property-management software to provide a stable foundation for you and your tenants, owners and investors. The right technology will help keep your business running in times of disrupted work, furloughs and unemployment.

An all-in-one platform means you can run your business with a single system which means one system to implement, manage and train your staff on. This will also make it much more efficient to scale and add functionality in the future. Future-proofing means preparing to operate at full steam even when you're running a skeleton crew.

Think about the work you might need to automate to get by during a recession. Investment management, income verification and maintenance call center support are three examples of tools that automate otherwise time-consuming tasks. Another important thing is making sure your software provider provides the support and resources you need to get over transition hurdles quickly.

New York-based property managers must choose their software wisely. Not every offering has built-in functionality that allows tracking and reporting as required by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal. This ensures you're always in compliance and automates the calculation of new rents and generation of annual apartment registration forms.

Update your website & social media

Your website is a major access point for many prospects. In fact, a recent NMHC Renter Preferences Survey found that 80% of potential renters will visit a property management company's website. If you don't have an online presence, there's a good chance you won't be taken seriously and get passed for a competitor.

Your website needs to stay updated, but you're probably not going to make changes to it every day. For truly up-to-the-minute information, use social media. It's a great place to attract prospects. In fact, studies show up to half of your leads will look for you on social media.

Consider long-term leases for multifamily properties

Vacant units are a major drain on income. Short-term leases can be a nice draw for residents who

don't want to get locked into long contracts. But there's a downside to these rentals. If tenants don't stick around, you're forced to spend money and time finding new tenants and turning units.

In the face of a recession, one of the best things you can do is keep your units occupied. Residential property managers might require six-month or one-year minimum leases. In some markets, you can get away with even longer-term leases of 18 months or more.

However, some residents expect month-to-month rentals. How can you appeal to these renters during a recession? Get creative! Consider offering leases that relax over time. You could require new renters to sign a one-year lease that becomes month-to-month after the first year. This strategy meets cautious or exacting renters in the middle.

Keep a backup plan for remote work

Even with a future-proof business plan, a health crisis or natural disaster might force you and your staff to make drastic changes. When the pandemic forced millions of people out of the office, many businesses were left scrambling to set up their employees for remote work. It's better to be prepared to ensure the smoothest transition possible.

There are other reasons to let your employees work from home. If someone is feeling a little under the weather but can still do their duties, remote work will prevent their illness from spreading to coworkers. If your office can stay efficient and your team is productive working remote, it can be a competitive perk that also boosts morale, as long as it doesn't interfere with work.

Try not to sweat what you can't control

Recessions happen and are unavoidable. Luckily, modern tech means you don't have to worry about making predictions as to when the next one will arrive. But cloud-based property management software isn't just for protection against recessions, of course. It's now an essential tool for the job in every economy. It helps you stay on top of your business, eliminates the human error that wastes precious time and broadly speaking, it sets your entire office up for success. You can't ask for much more than that.

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