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# Retain a Personal Touch with a Tech Focus

Within the field of property management, technology has evolved greatly over the past few decades. It's changed the way safety and security, daily operations and resident interactions take place. Automation alone has altered the way staff and residents interact with each other. From parcel delivery to parking management, amenity bookings and email communication, there's no doubt that online management has had a far-reaching impact on daily life in condo communities across the country.

Board meeting minutes, move in/move out documents and resident

profiles are stored safely in the cloud and accessible via permission-based controls. The amount of time and money saved makes online management the obvious choice for most condo communities.

But, has all this technology made it harder to retain a personal touch?

For some, there is a growing sense that technology can take away from the personal touch many property managers like to provide, so it is very important to have great communication skills. A personal touch can, and should, be the cornerstone of every interaction in a condo community –

even with the shift towards a greater reliance on technology. Integration between humans and technology should never be at the expense of convenience. Rather, it should make everyone's life easier.

While there will never be a substitute for face-to-face interaction, more user-friendly platforms and some simple practices by management can actually help bring people together. Smart technology that is easy-to-use helps everyone on staff deliver great resident experiences.

Here are some tips to the bridge between technology and human interac-





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tion, making life in a managed community easier and more enjoyable for all:

- As the property manager, you should be accessible to all, especially your residents. Email shouldn't be the only channel that is used to contact you. Allow residents to reach out by calling your phone or implement a pager system. Next, make sure you get back to them within one business day.

- When new residents move in, automated personalized welcome messages should be sent to their inboxes. In

addition to bylaws and welcome documents, property managers should take a moment to welcome newcomers to the building. If an online property management platform is used, take the opportunity to explain how to access and use the platform. It's also a good idea to explain the benefits of the platform including how the technology can help make their lives easier.

- Make sure to update your resident/community portal with your picture and contact information for

a more personal touch. Include a bit about your background so residents feel that you are approachable and consider asking board members to do the same. In fact, many communities even host periodic "meet and greets" for all residents to cultivate a sense of connectivity among neighbours.

- A resident/community portal can help you improve your communication with the building(s) as a whole so post announcements and updates on a regular basis. Announcements should be grouped for relevant recipients, for example a water shut down in the 01 line should only go out to 01 residents, not to everyone in the building. This reduces the overall communications that residents will receive from management – you don't want people to start ignoring your communication because they receive too much or irrelevant information! It will also make them feel more closely connected with the management platform itself (not to mention management) because the communication they receive will be useful and specific to them.

- Figuring out what residents want in order to improve service can be a complicated and daunting task. But today, a property manager can easily leverage automated surveys and other forms using real-time communication to collect useful feedback from residents.

Overall, it is really about making the extra effort to connect with residents on a personal level and make them feel a part of the community. Many people choose condo life in part because of the community aspect and, at the very least, almost all residents are looking for convenience in their daily lives.

Taking the time to articulate how technology can create a sense of community while also showing how it can simplify their daily lives can go a long way in getting resident buy-in.

Lastly, don't forget that everyone has different levels of skill and understanding of technology. Make sure that in-person training for all technology platforms takes place in your community and is provided by your online management provider; it's a must and it will save you time and money in the long run. ■

**Peter Pietrzkiewicz** is founder and CEO of Concierge Plus.



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