

## PROACTIVE MARKETING: Format for Researching Competitor's Advertising

**Advertising Ideas** Use this section to record and store all of the bright advertising ideas and fun themes that occur to you, before you forget them!

**A Networking Directory** is used to record the names and contact information for your community's locators. Use a Locator Promotion Log to record your efforts in marketing to locators.

**Apartment Publications** Store your contracts in this section along with publication deadlines for ad placement and changes. Use the Apartment Publication Advertising Log to record each ad that you run, along with the results that you achieve, to help you to make more informed decisions. Add additional pages for storing your ads. Plastic "document protectors", available at all major office supply stores, are excellent for this purpose.

**Bottom Line Marketing** Positive results are what separates well-spent money from wasted dollars, and the only way to determine which is which is to carefully measure the results of your valuable marketing efforts. Use your Traffic Report to determine where your marketing investments are and aren't being returned.

**Brochures / Letterhead** This is used to store your community's previous and current imaging materials, including brochures and your complete letterhead suite (stationery, envelopes, cards, business cards, etc.), and to record design specifications, development details, and to record production quotes, updates, and reprints. This is also a great place to store competitor's brochures and other competitor materials for comparison purposes, or keep any other well-designed marketing / imaging materials that might provide inspiration or a fresh design perspective. Add your own photo page inserts or plastic sleeves to store photographs, slides, negatives, or logo slicks.

**Community Newsletters** Store all of the information used to create your community's newsletters, including vendor contact information if you out-source, or design specifications if you create in-house. It's also helpful to keep a year's worth of your community's previous newsletters for handy reference. Use the Newsletter Design log to record closing dates, production deadlines, and notes.

**Direct Mail** Store all of the contact information for your production and mailing lists and vendors. Create forms for recording design specifications for each direct mail piece that you produce, mailing list key codes, and tracking results. This is the ideal place to store both drafts and finished examples of your community's direct mail pieces, and other pieces that may provide inspiration or fresh design perspective.

**Fax / Marketing Collateral** This section is a "catch-all" for all of the marketing materials you produce for your community, including fax cover sheets, flyers, coupons for "specials", posters, etc. It's also a handy place to keep examples of marketing pieces produced by your competitors, to help you maintain awareness of their marketing efforts, and grab that essential competitive edge!

**Flags / Banners / Billboards** Record the resource information for your favorite flag and banner suppliers and billboard companies. Use a log form to record orders and specifications. Keep track of when you put up your community flags and when you should change them. Add your own photo pages to establish a visual record of your flag, banner, and billboard advertising efforts.

**Follow-Up** Five is the magic number of follow-ups needed to convert a visit to a rental! Multifamily Pro's favorite strategy is to mail a card right after the future resident has walked out

your door to thank them for visiting. Next, call within the first 24 hours. The third and fourth contacts should also be in writing. Finally, the most effective fifth point of contact is a personal phone call. This section is also a great place to store samples and examples of your community's usual follow-up tools, sample letters for the leasing team to reference, and a copy of your follow-up policy.

**Internet Advertising** Experts predict that 100 million people are expected to be online by the turn of the century, making the Internet an information-sharing force that you can't ignore! Use this section to plan, organize, and keep track of your options, established presence, and results achieved through online apartment publications. This is also a great place to keep copies of Internet marketing articles, current printed copies of all information posted online about your community at online apartment advertising sites (like For Rent Magazine's [www.aptsforrent.com](http://www.aptsforrent.com)), and messages received about your community's online presence for staff reference.

**Lease Renewal Promotions** A successful resident retention program is positively key to your community's ongoing profitability! Use this section to store plans and examples of your community's renewal campaigns and collateral for easy reference, and to track results! When used in conjunction with the 2-2-3-3 program provided under the Resident Retention section and techniques discussed in the Resident Retention course, you'll be well on your way to renewal and retention success!

**Marketing Calls** We all know that it's impossible to ensure a community's success within a vacuum. That means that an ongoing outreach program is essential to developing and fostering awareness of your community within your market area. Use this section to store samples of the flyers and promotional pieces that you develop for marketing outreach, and record your contacts and results!

**Marketing Ideas** Use this section in much the same way that you use the Advertising Ideas section, to record all of the best marketing event and campaign ideas that occur to you, before you forget them! This section should include a Brainstorming Worksheet that will help you to explore and develop marketing ideas and campaigns to spark continued creativity (there's nothing like one good idea to lead to even better ideas!); and help ensure success before you move forward into development and execution. Three-hole-punch and add your own sketches, notes, and drafts.

**Marketing Plans** This section is used to maintain a complete copy of your community's current marketing plan and marketing related policies. It may be helpful to maintain a double-spaced hard copy to allow room for writing notes and changes as they occur.

**Marketing Promotions** Record all of those great marketing ideas that make it into execution! This is the ideal place to record implementation specifics and results, accompanied by samples and photos. You may also choose to add samples and notes from your competitors' promotional efforts for easy reference, and a little help in achieving and maintaining a competitive edge!

**Miscellaneous** This is the place for all of those important ideas, samples, and details that don't seem to fit as neatly anywhere else. Use this section to explore new possibilities and set new goals. We find it helpful to keep copies of our company/community mission and vision statements here for inspiration!

**Models** This is the place for everything related to your community's models, from décor resources to photos of the finished products.

**Press Releases** Store all press releases relative to your community. If you haven't taken advantage of this great tool to gain media attention, there's no time like right now! An example has been provided to get you off to a great start! Use the Media Directory to record your contacts, and the Press Release Log to record each release and track results.

**Product Design** Marketability starts with good product design and continues into presenting your community to its best advantage, and combating functional obsolescence. Use this section to store annotated floor plans and site plans that spotlight your community's best features, and refer to it often to support and refine your marketing and leasing efforts. The best features are the ones that your residents and future residents both need and want!

**Resident Referrals** Give this section all of the attention due to your BEST and most inexpensive lead source! Whether you're legally able to offer paid referral fees or not, the key to an effective resident referral program is to be consistent and ask for referrals every month, and you're certain to see amazing results. Use this section to log and track your referral efforts and results. (Note: See our Tools & Forms Catalogue on the Sales & Marketing Magic website, [www.smmonline.com](http://www.smmonline.com), for a great selection of inexpensive door hangers and other promotional items for both paid and non-paid referral programs!)

**Resources** Advertising and marketing effectiveness depends upon a wealth of information, and this section will help you to keep track of all the important tools and factors that help to ensure your success! Use this section to store supporting information and data, including demographic reports, resident testimonials, comp studies, news clippings, photos and more. This valuable arsenal of information will serve as a comprehensive "intelligence" report in support of the other sections of the book as you strive to create more effective ads, campaigns, and strategies!

**Multifamily Pro** Sign up for a free Tools & Forms Catalogue for Apartment Managers! You'll find a wealth of tools and information guaranteed to help you increase traffic, rents, and occupancy while reducing resident turnover. [www.SMMOnline.com](http://www.SMMOnline.com)

**Signage** Well-designed and maintained signage is an essential component of your community's overall image. Use this section to record signage specifications, pertinent maintenance information, and to record repairs and upgrades.

**Special Events** There are few ways to create a memorable impression in the minds of your residents and future residents than to show them a great time! It's not difficult to create truly special events, but it does require imagination, careful planning and well-staffed execution. Review the Resident Retention course in the e-University course catalog for great resources on planning events.

**Surveys** If you want to know what your residents and future residents are looking for, simply ask them! Surveys can provide the most finely tuned information available about your target market. Use this section to store your community's survey forms and summary reports of the data that they provide. Use this information in conjunction with the Resources section and other sections of the book in developing targeted ads, campaigns, and retention strategies that really hit their mark!

**Training / Marketing Workshops** The very best way to achieve and maintain a competitive edge is to learn the finer points of marketing as a discipline, and continue to develop the necessary skills through ongoing training. Use this section to store training plans, materials, and other information resources that can help you and your staff to more effectively present your community to residents and future residents alike!

**Web Site Design and Support** Use this section in conjunction with the Internet Advertising section of the book to develop or record the design of your company's web site, record contact information for your webmaster, and to track updates. This is a great place to store current printed copies of the complete web site for staff reference.