



How to Speak Maintenance

Everyone in multifamily should learn to speak maintenance!

Article 3 | Getting Rid of the Whiteboard

As we head into the third installment of the “How to Speak Maintenance” series, it should be no surprise at this point that strong communication between the office and maintenance teams is imperative for a property. However, many property teams are still relying on dry erase boards for their office and maintenance needs, from tracking service requests and preventative maintenance to outlining team goals and processes.

However, collecting all of this information in a format like a dry erase board can be problematic for numerous reasons. It can lead to unnecessary confusion because:

- ⊗ It can't be viewed by teams remotely, so there's no way to obtain information on demand.
- ⊗ It doesn't allow team members to update information in real time, leading to outdated and incorrect information.
- ⊗ It can unintentionally or intentionally be erased or altered incorrectly, without methods of tracking.
- ⊗ Only one person or team is responsible for updating the information, with no easy way to relay changes to the rest of the group.

Today, there are a variety of tools and technologies available to help properties better manage their processes, tracking and communication. Whether within a team or between different departments, these programs can do everything the whiteboard can, plus a lot more. Depending on the team's budget and needs, software to explore can include Yardi, Teams, MRI, OneSite, or Google Sheets (which is cost free).

Especially as off-site working and staffing issues rise, having the capability to access and share information remotely will become more important, and utilizing a collaborative tool to manage your property's information will help minimize vacancy loss. Many of these programs can also be accessed from a smartphone or tablet, which allows team members to update and share information instantaneously. In fact, many of your property's suppliers have likely adopted websites and tools to help track inventory and orders.

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To successfully roll out a new technology and mobile tool (and finally get rid of that dreaded whiteboard!), leadership needs to champion the cause and encourage the transition. While change may be met with resistance from the teams initially, and it requires up front time and resource dedication, providing training and support will help the teams and users become more comfortable and confident using the technology. A small, proactive initial investment will lead to increased efficiency across the property later on.

Key Takeaways:

- Office and maintenance teams need to be able to communicate and access reliable information, whether on site or remotely.
- Using whiteboards to track maintenance requests and processes can be problematic, as it may lead to outdated, untimely and incorrect information and unnecessary confusion among teams.
- There are a variety of tools and software options available to help properties better maintain their information and track changes and processes.
- With a virtual tool, managers and team members can continue collaborating by accessing and updating their information at any time from any location.
- Leadership can help support this initiative by providing training to help individuals feel more comfortable and confident using these new tools.

“How to Speak Maintenance” is a monthly series that focuses on teaching property managers and office staff how to better understand and appreciate the work and the value of the maintenance teams, eliminate conflict points that come up, and provide better customer service for our residents.

Thanks to our “HVAC Readiness” contributors:

*Jason Fein, National Maintenance Service Director for Camden Property Trust
Mark Hurley, President of Highland Commercial Properties and past TAA president
Corky Wolf, Member of the Facilities team for Highland Commercial Properties
Becca Ramati, Vice President of TAA’s Education Foundation*