Using Resident and Community Data

Service providers already have what they need to improve connectivity experiences in multifamily housing.

By Bruce Sanders / *Multifamily Broadband Council and Elauwit*

In the words of Steve Jobs, "You've got to start with the customer experience and work back to the technology – not the other way around."

Creating great customer experiences is more than a slogan or buzzword. It is of paramount importance to the success of any telecommunications provider. Customer support can no longer focus on solving day-to-day service frustrations. Being proactive, rather than reactive, is imperative.

The basics of managing resident broadband experiences in multifamily housing include a respectable list of improvement opportunities: collecting resident feedback, analyzing pain points, creating "heat maps" to prioritize major hassles and mapping the customer journey from beginning to end.

However, being proactive requires more than the basics, so newer tools are coming to the forefront. Technology service providers have a vast amount of data from resident activities. They can use this data to create a disciplined, scientific approach to serving residents. In communities with bulk service, broadband service providers can use data to support and enhance the business activities of multifamily owners and managers.

An independent survey by Ian Golding and Customer Experience Consultancy found some common characteristics of companies and brands that earn consumer loyalty. By percentage of responses from highest to lowest, the list includes the following:

- Corporate attitude — 15.9
- Ease of doing business — 14.9
- Helpfulness in dealing with problems — 11.4
- Employees' attitudes — 9.4
- Personalization — 8.0
- Product or service — 8.0
- Consistency — 7.5
- Subjective feelings — 6.3
- Treatment of customers — 5.1
- Reliability — 4.4
- Following through on promises — 4.2
- Timeliness — 2.6
- Employees' technical knowledge — 2.3

What stands out in the list is the high ranking of attitude and helpfulness over all else, including product, reliability and technical knowledge. Focusing on these attributes can move a company from firefighting to building a compelling relationship.

Companies that get the resident experience right will create long-lasting customer relationships and earn significant competitive advantages over those that compete solely on product, price or promotion. According to Forbes, 89 percent of customers say they have switched companies because of a poor customer experience.

Multifamily residents have become too savvy and skillful to put up with inferior experiences. They will either try to "adjust" a provider's network equipment to make it work better or, more likely, turn to competitors that deliver a frictionless, helpful, more relevant experience. Service providers will find their focus on customer experience profitable. According to the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, 85 percent of consumers say they will pay up to 25 percent more to ensure a superior customer experience, and acquiring a new customer is six to seven times more expensive than keeping a current one.

DATA ENHANCES PREDICTIVE SOLUTIONS

Smart technology providers learn to use the data they gather from serving multifamily communities to better measure user

and property experiences. This allows for better, more informed decisions in serving residents and community owners. Data allows providers to take a proactive approach to customer satisfaction and enables the prediction of future failures.

For example, new diagnostic tools help service providers determine whether problems originate at the network edge, a switch, an access point or a user device. In many cases, providers can now resolve network problems remotely – and quickly – thus improving resident experiences.

Similarly, data aggregated from wireless access points and sensors can benefit property owners by measuring resident use of various amenity spaces and building access and egress. It also facilitates camera surveillance, energy management, asset tracking, utility leak detection and more.

Fulfilling residents' personal

> Diagnostic tools can help providers determine where problems originate, and analytic tools can help owners manage buildings.

needs and the strategic business needs of community owners depends on analytics that link structured and unstructured connectivity data. This allows agile service providers to quickly modify processes and procedures while anticipating and even preventing the pitfalls that can lead to negative customer experiences.

The tools to provide better, more satisfying telecommunications experiences for multifamily residents have never been more relevant and available. Because today's 14-year-olds will expect even more when they

become adults, service providers that focus on resident experiences now and in the future will exceed expectations in serving the unique needs of the multifamily industry. ❖

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