

Making the Transformation

from Leasing Agent to Leasing Consultant *Forging Beyond a Title!*

The titles *Leasing Agent* and *Leasing Consultant* are used interchangeably in the property management industry. However, if you search for “agent” versus “consultant” on any dictionary website you will receive two very different definitions. An agent is a representative of a business firm. In contrast, a consultant is a person who confers with someone and gives professional or expert advice.

It has become fashionable to replace the title of *Sales Representative* or *Leasing Agent* on business cards with one of *Consultant*. Often there is no real change in the employee’s actions or responsibilities when this happens, even though the intent is to portray a greater degree of expertise and relatability to the client, as opposed to that of a salesperson or agent. But is there a real difference?

Research has shown that those with “consultant” type behaviors thrive on problem solving, whereas salespeople are traditionally motivated instead by recognition or achievement. *Consultants* enjoy being placed in situations where unique solutions are required in order to solve client problems. This type of behavior is beneficial in the leasing process because of the uniqueness of each client who comes through the door. Let’s examine the differences in more detail.

The DIFFERENCES:

Leasing Agent

I am a Leasing Agent; I sell. I offer a variety of apartment homes and services that you can choose from. My goal is to make sure that you decide to lease from me. As a result, I will generate more income for me and my company.

- a. I tend to talk more and then listen.
- b. I explain features and benefits of all of the apartments, amenities and services, regardless if the feature, amenity or benefit truly matters to you my client or not.
- c. I ask my client very few questions.
- d. I focus on the product I am selling, rather than my client’s problem.

Leasing Consultant

I am a Leasing Consultant; I serve. I put your needs first. My initial goal is to understand your situation, lifestyle and home needs so you can make an informed decision. I make recommendations that help you find the best apartment home and price to meet your unique needs.

- a. I listen and qualify my client on the telephone and/or during the first in-person contact, as clients sometimes have needs they don’t even realize but that I can help them uncover.
- b. I listen more than I talk. Listening is an active (not passive) behavior.
- c. I recommend features and benefits (such as saving time, money or the environment, or adding convenience) that matter to my client.
- d. I focus on solving my client’s problems, by offering a solution based on understanding their problem.

The TRANSFORMATION:

In order to lease like a *Consultant* it is important that you first aim to understand the way people think. The best *Consultants* have the desire to understand the client’s situation and then play that explanation back to the client. You will be driven to ask questions and gather information. It is important that you fully understand a situation before making a recommendation to the client.

Here’s a simple test to help you determine if you have made the transformation from *Agent* to *Consultant*.

- * Do you genuinely enjoy solving a problem?
- * Do you like meeting new clients, not knowing what their expectations will be?
- * Have you studied and learned a variety of questions, as well as diligently uncovered your community’s potential benefits, so you can help your clients by asking better questions?
- * Can you handle a high level of uncertainty?

If you can answer Yes to all four questions, it is likely that you are more of a *Consultant* than an *Agent*. In property management, you will likely be thrown a curve ball every time you meet a new client. You’ll achieve great success if you truly understand the client’s needs and meet them, rather than just focusing on your own needs and “getting the lease”.

The better you understand the client’s perspective, the more likely they are to lease from you.

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