

Morgan Drives Lead Growth at the Edge of the Digital Revolution

MORGAN PROPERTIES

Established in 1985 by Mitchell L. Morgan, Morgan Properties is a real estate investment and management company. Morgan Properties owns and manages 116 apartment communities with almost 30,000 apartment homes in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia and Nebraska. The company has partnered with Apartment Guide on numerous consumer-marketing transitions from print to digital to mobile.

The Challenge | Rapidly Changing Technology

In the fourth quarter of 2001, Amazon.com turned its first quarterly profit. It was one of the first real signs that consumer behavior was transforming from a bricks and mortar reality to a digital world. Much to the dismay of print shops and traditional retailers, the transition only accelerated from there, forcing even apartment marketers to join the rapidly evolving Digital Revolution.

For apartment marketers, the evolution has seemingly sprinted from print ads to Internet listing services (ILS) to community websites to mobile-apps for iPhone and Android to mobile-friendly websites to resident ratings and reviews. Keeping up with the pace of that change has been difficult for all apartment owners and operators. Morgan Properties is no exception.

The company was grateful for partners like Apartment Guide, who helped them meet the rapidly changing consumer behavior that came alongside the technological advancements, says Peggy Hale, vice president of sales, marketing & training for Morgan Properties.

“They are cutting edge to make sure that Apartment Guide is the No. 1 source across the web for all people searching,” Hale says. “They’ve just done a tremendous job, and it’s from listening to their clients and working directly with them on what to add.”





The Solution | Keeping Partners on the Cutting Edge

By keeping pace with the Digital evolution, Apartment Guide has played a pivotal role in the success of Morgan's digital marketing platform from its online presence through links and search engine optimization and mobile advertising.

"Our success on the web is partly due to our partners and ILSs that feed visitors back to our website," Hale says. "We're very focused on driving folks to our website and Apartment Guide is one of our partners that does that. They allow us to have links. While my ad may look really good and appealing on Apartment Guide, people always want to know what they are moving into and more about the management company."

Those ads also needed to show up on page one when customers searched for Morgan's apartment homes using Google. As search engine optimization and search engine marketing was starting to gain traction, Apartment Guide was in the mix again. "Their search engine optimization and search engine marketing is absolutely second to none in our industry," Hale says.

When customers started turning to mobile devices to search for apartment homes, Apartment Guide proved to be ahead of the curve again. The company launched the industry's first app for iPhone in 2008, just one year after the first iPhone was released. Apartment Guide then launched the industry's first app for Android in 2009, the industry's first iPad app in 2010 and the industry's first Kindle Fire app in 2011.

Most recently, in April 2014, Apartment Guide officially announced that they had printed their final edition of Apartment Guide magazine. It was the end of an era, and a symbolic milestone, marking the company's successful transition from print to digital. But more importantly the transition was part of Morgan Property's success as well.

The Results | More Leads & Better Leads

Throughout the consumer transition from print to digital, Apartment Guide has been a strategic partner for Hale, who points to Morgan's significant web traffic growth over the last four years as just one sign of success.

"In the last four years, we've gone from 750,000 unique visitors annually to almost 2 million," Hale says. "So I commend them for allowing us to link to our site. Not all of the ILSs do it. We let them know how many leads they bring off their site to our site and the transactions that happen."

Apartment Guide continues to drive traffic, leads and move-ins to Morgan today. From 2012 to 2013, Apartment Guide increased leads by 5 percent and move-ins by 7 percent to Morgan. Apartment Guide is Morgan's No. 1 generator of leads and leases by volume and tied for No. 2 in converting those leads into move-ins.

"Also during that time frame, the leads coming to the Morgan website increased by 12 percent and leases increased by 17 percent," Hale says. "About 8 percent of those are attributed to how many people clicked on the Apartment Guide links."

By successfully transitioning from print to digital, Apartment Guide has delivered more leads to Morgan than any other ILS and played a vital role in assisting the company in its own transition to online marketing.