

Resident Retention Ideas

1. **Inexpensive Way to Update your Look** – Home Depot has inexpensive welcome mats for new residents. About \$5 each, uniform mats add consistency to the “look” of your community.
2. **Maintenance How To's for New Residents** – These can be printed on your laser printer. Do what one community in Arizona is doing – printing maintenance “how to's” on Post-Its. Put “how to” stickies near the appliance. For example:
 - How to Set the Microwave Clock
 - How to Reset the Disposal
 - What should not go in this disposal
 - Set Thermostat by...
3. **There is a community in Dallas with a “candy man”** – The candy man's job is to give free popcorn to residents. (rough life, huh?) Actually, it goes a bit deeper. As residents pick up their popcorn, the candy man strikes up a conversation with the residents – ensuring everything is A-OK. The candy man also sells candy and has service request forms at the ready. The cost of the popcorn makes up for itself tenfold in increased resident communication and preventive maintenance.
4. **Renewal Sound Machines**...are becoming popular. If residents are sick of noisy neighbors (trains, traffic) give them white noise machines as a renewal gift. Sound machines are available at drug stores and upscale stores like Sharper Image and Hammacher Schlemmer. Price ranges from \$10 - \$80 each. Work out a volume discount with your local drug store.
5. **Resident Retention One Piece at a Time** – Claire Collins stayed in a bed and breakfast where there was a group puzzle in the living room. Claire reports that nearly everyone passing by took a minute or two (or longer!) to work on the puzzle. We can do this in club rooms and leasing areas, too, as a community building activity.
6. **Resident Horticulturist** – A company in northwest Florida is developing a new community called Water Colors. The first employee hired – a resident horticulturist to oversee the resort's environmental programs and practices. A horticulturist in your portfolio could be a great selling tool for your company. Cheaper – your landscaping company probably has an in-house horticulturist. Let residents and prospects know that a professional does your landscaping and takes “proper environmental practices” into consideration.
7. **Office Supplies Vending Machine** – If you live in Denver and desperately need office supplies at 2am, you're in luck. GetGo Office Supply Cabinets are in nine locations throughout Denver, all in your local 24-hour supermarket. The vending machines offer Post-it notes, blank CD-ROMs, ink-jet cartridges, etc. This idea is cool for us too.
8. **Special Touches** – I stayed at the Four Seasons in Houston and they had a card with “Special Touches” services guests could use or borrow. Adapting it to our industry, we can have a Special Touches list to loan out :
 - Card tables
 - Tool boxes
 - Hideaway beds
 - Hotel bell carts
 - Moving dollies
 - Port-a-cribs
 - Lap tops
 - Pagers
 - Cell phones
 - Office supplies box

- Fix a flat
- Car battery chargers
- Jumper cables

One community has service techs set up and remove the hideaway bed for residents -- just like hotels do. Great service!

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