# Multifamily Customer Experience: What's Next for 2024?

# Webinar

Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>





## Speakers



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Enterprise Managing Consultant RealFoundations (*Moderator*)



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SVP, Marketing and Communications Waterton

Customer Experience (CX) and Marketing **Technologies** Report Highlights February 2024







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## 2023 Customer Experience (CX) Technology Survey

### **Survey Overview**

The multifamily digital landscape has been radically transformed by the 'Great App Explosion', presenting both unprecedented opportunities and challenges. For multifamily owners and operators, navigating this explosion is essential to maintaining a competitive advantage and delivering a superior resident experience. To evaluate the influence and effectiveness of the proliferating use of applications shaping customer touchpoints within multifamily, RealFoundations partnered with NMHC to launch the 2023 Customer Experience (CX) Technology Survey.

The multifamily industry is at a critical point for technology adoption and customer experience enhancement. The underlying goal of the survey was to delve deeper into the applications used to improve the customer journey, along with the management and performance measurement of the technology, and ultimately empower owners and operators to enhance their technology capabilities, irrespective of their scale or resources.

### **Survey Methodology**

The survey design involved collaboration with NMHC member committees, RealFoundations, and NMHC staff, and was distributed digitally to NMHC's active member base. A total of 40 multifamily companies participated in the survey, with responses garnered from leaders in marketing, operations and technology. The representative pool of respondents comprised a diverse range of company sizes, grouped as small (fewer than 10k units) to very large (over 60k units), with significant representation from large companies having 25,000 to 59,999 units in their portfolio. Along with company size, the respondent organizations were categorized as either Owner & Operator, Owner and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Manager, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Manager.

Questions within the survey focused on technologies utilized for 32 distinct Customer Experience areas; 25 customer-facing and 7 internally-facing, all which support the customer journey, such as:

- How many apps are operators managing throughout the customer journey?
- Which customer touchpoints do companies view as being the most impactful customer service opportunities?
- What customer touchpoints are currently automated? What are the obstacles to automating additional touchpoints; time, money, resources, expertise, human-first culture, etc.?
- When a new application is added to the technology stack, what are the most pressing goals?
- How are companies measuring the impact of applications on the customer experience? On internal operations?

Although the survey requested data related to in-use technology, specific technology brands were not named in the initial survey results or final report. Responses were carefully anonymized and aggregated to maintain respondent confidentiality. These results were analyzed to produce the 2023 Customer Experience (CX) Technology Report.

Disclaimer: "Information contained herein is a direct reflection of the survey responses provided by company respondents; information in no way reflects RealFoundations' opinion or expressed recommendations of any technology referenced."

2023 NMHC / RF Customer Experience (CX) Technology Report Highlights | February 2024



## 2023 Customer Experience (CX) Technology Report

### Summary Observations & Findings

The survey reveals that most multifamily operators are utilizing 10 to 20 different solution providers in the delivery of the customer experience. The wide array of technology solutions are predominantly managed by the Marketing department, followed by the Property Operations and Technology teams.

Most companies are applying a structured approach to technology adoption, with 95% of companies emphasizing the importance of setting explicit goals and objectives when implementing new solutions. Almost 61% of survey respondents considered improving efficiencies as their top priority, ancillary revenue is not a primary driver. Factors like customer service and satisfaction also play a significant role, while compliance and cost reduction have varied importance among survey respondents.

42% of companies state that customers have benefitted the most from 'Attract and Engage' technology. In the next 12 to 18 months, companies are poised to invest more in enhancing the 'Resident Experience' and 'Renewals' touchpoints within the customer journey, along with refining the 'Application' process.

All respondents view budget constraint as a significant obstacle when implementing new technologies. Additionally, balancing human interaction and the use of technology at customer touchpoints to support a company's culture and brand is seen as an obstacle when adopting new technology. Not only do companies report resource constraints for the research, identification and evaluation of viable solutions, they report the lack of resources (which include time, knowledge, dedicated people, etc.) to fully support the solution once implemented.

Companies are prioritizing the measurement of engagement, especially when deploying new technology solutions. This focus emphasizes the commitment to understanding customer interactions and refining, when necessary. A diverse set of tools and metrics are being used to measure engagement, including Google Analytics, conversion ratios, vendor-provided and custom reports and dashboards, along with simple metrics like views, clicks and time spent in the application.

The 2023 Customer Experience (CX) Technology Report offers a diverse, technology-agnostic, panoramic view of the multifamily customer experience technology landscape. While respondents demonstrate a strong inclination towards a wide range of technologies, from virtual tours to resident experience platforms, the road to full scale adoption is laden with challenges.

As the industry continues to evolve, these insights serve as a compass, pointing towards areas of focus, challenges to overcome, and the immense potential that technology holds in enhancing the multifamily customer journey.

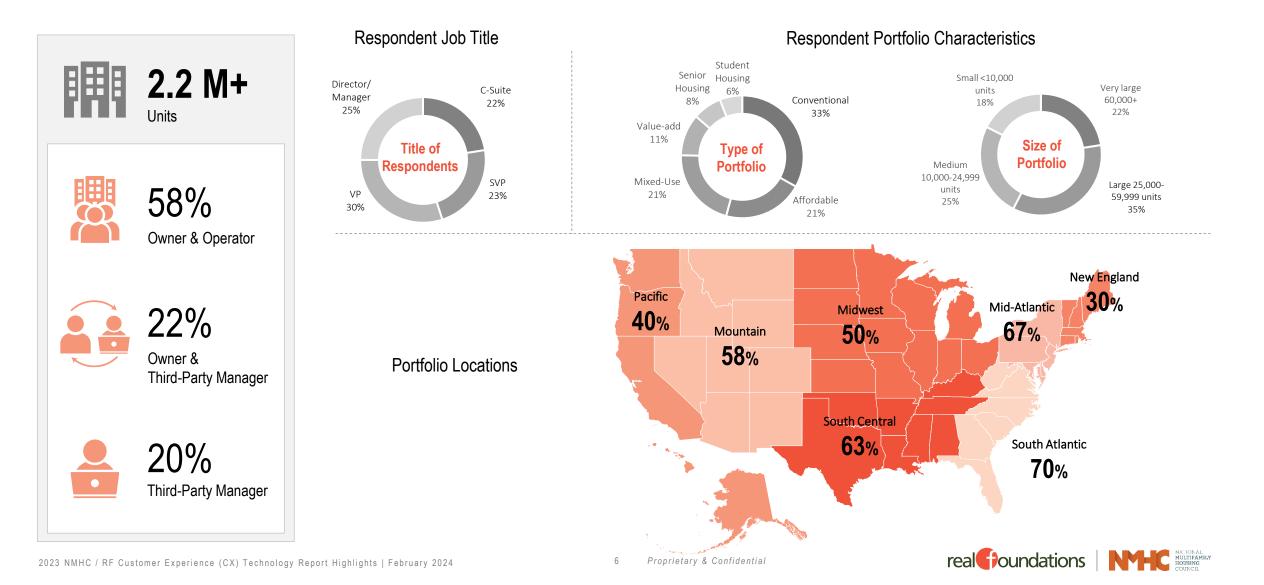
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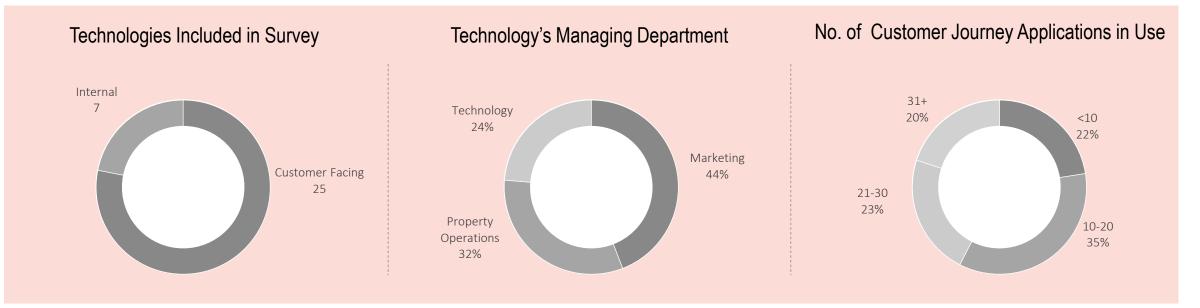


## 2023 CX Tech Survey | Respondent Overview

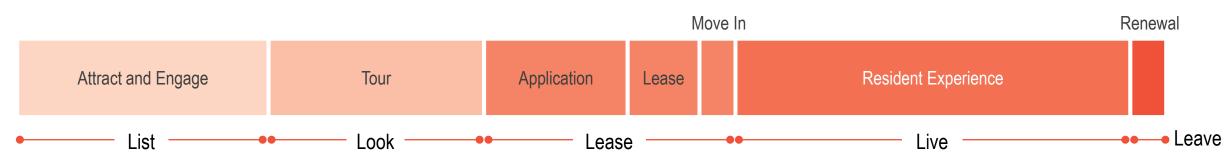
A total of 40 multifamily firms completed the survey. Total response counts for the questions below can be assumed to be 40.



## 2023 CX Tech Survey | Technology Snapshot



### Customer Journey For Multifamily Resident and Survey Question Technology Areas

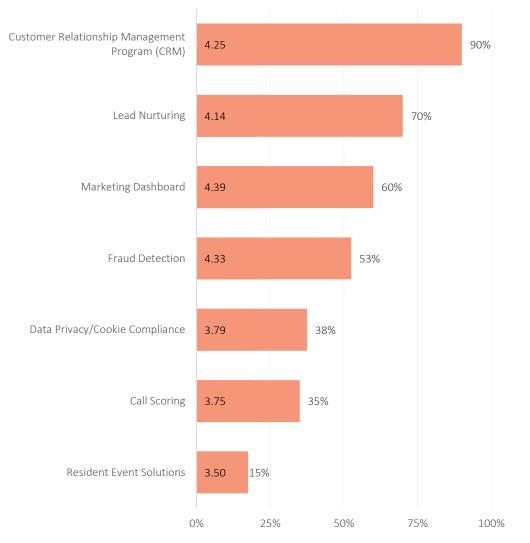




## 2023 CX Tech Survey | Technology Snapshot

#### % Utilization of Customer Facing Technology; 5-Point Customer Engagement Scale Service/Maintenance Requests 3.95 100% Rent Payment 4.35 100% **Resident Portal** 3.93 100% Applicant Portal 4.45 95% Virtual Tours of Units and/or Floorplans 3.87 95% Electronic Lease Signature 4.38 93% Tour Self-Scheduler 4.06 88% Customer Satisfaction Surveys 4.15 85% Self-Service Package Management 3.97 80% Automated Applicant Screening 4.33 78% Virtual Tour of Property Amenities 3.39 78% 4.40 75% Virtual Leasing Assistant Self-Guided Tours 3.32 73% Interactive Unit Availabity Map 3.86 70% Call Center 4.13 65% Accessibility Solutions 3.75 65% Live Video Tour with Property Representative 3.06 60% Resident Move-in/Move-out 3.89 50% Security Deposit Alternatives 3.90 50% Amenity Reservations 3.59 45% Self-Service Renewals 3.59 43% **Resident Reward Solutions** 3.93 40% 35% Flexible Rent Payment 4.14 Pet Screening 3.50 25% Concerige Services 18% 3.71 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

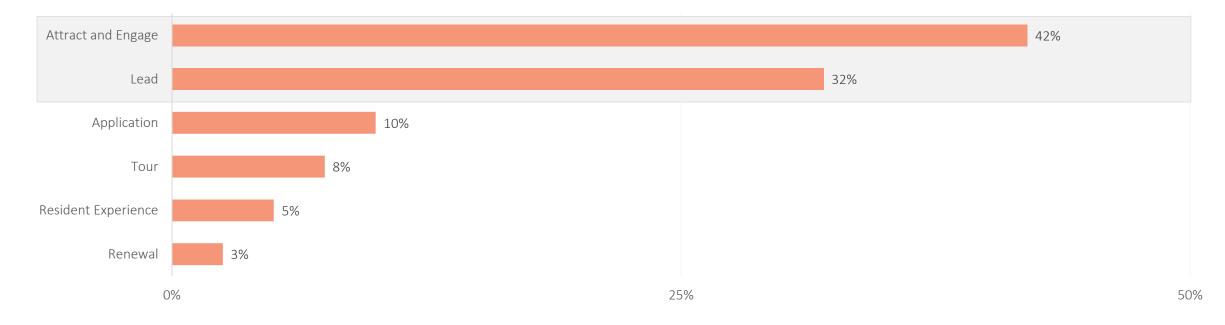
### % Utilization of Internal Technology; 5-Point Internal Engagement Scale





## Attract and Engage and Lead Areas Benefit Most from New CX Technology

What area of the customer journey has benefitted most from new CX technology solutions?



### CX Survey Insights

The COVID-19 pandemic forced operators to quickly reimagine the leasing process. As a result, the early phases of the customer journey, including attracting, engaging potential residents, and handling leads, saw the most significant advantages from the introduction of new technology solutions.

### Industry Insights

51% of multifamily property managers surveyed perceive that resident expectations for better community technology have increased.

### Voice of the Customer

Zego's 2023 Resident Experience Management Report ranks a "technology-enabled lifestyle" as the most important resident experience aspect for renters.<sup>1</sup>

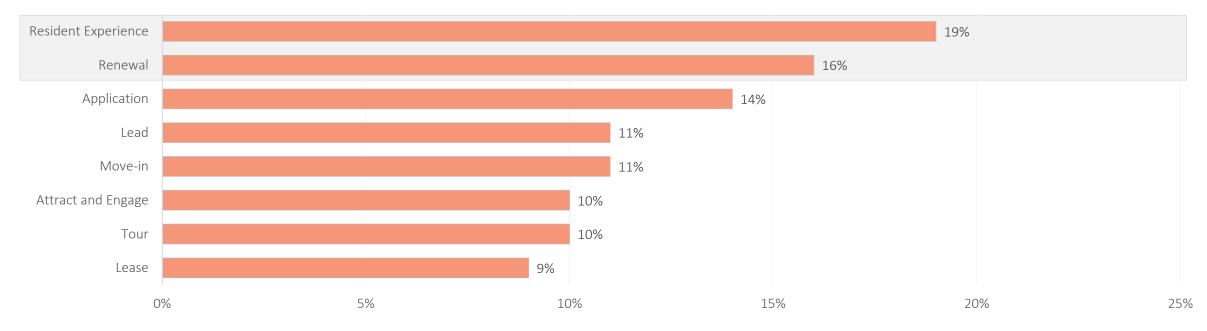
Source: <sup>1</sup>2023 Resident Experience Management Report (Zego)

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### Resident Experience and Renewal are the Next Focus Areas

Which areas of the customer journey will companies focus on in the next 12-18 months?



### CX Survey Insights

Based on survey feedback, the Resident Experience area has the most potential for immediate focus:

- ightarrow 40% utilization of Self-Serve Renewals
- ightarrow 43% utilization of Amenity reservations
- ightarrow 40% utilization of Resident Reward solutions
- $\rightarrow~$  17.5% utilization of Concierge Services with a high customer engagement ranking of 4.75

### Industry Insights

- $\rightarrow$  "57% of landlords are placing the management of resident relationships above all else when it comes to investment dollars."<sup>1</sup>
- $\rightarrow$  According to a study performed by McKinsey, a thoughtful customer journey can boost customer satisfaction by 20%.<sup>2</sup>

### Voice of the Customer

"Today's residents are accustomed to convenience and ease of use in their everyday lives. The right property technology (PropTech) can provide communities with safety, comfort, community, security and more. This also returns valuable time to on-site teams, easing the operational load that is so needed."<sup>3</sup>

Source: <sup>1</sup>Resident Retention for MF Owners and Investors 2023 Update, <sup>2</sup>Experience-led Growth: A New Way to Create Value, <sup>3</sup>2023 Multifamily Trends Guide Emily Burke, Moved

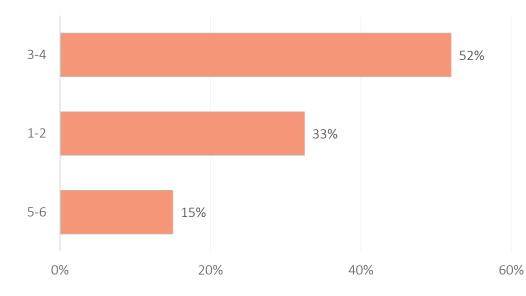
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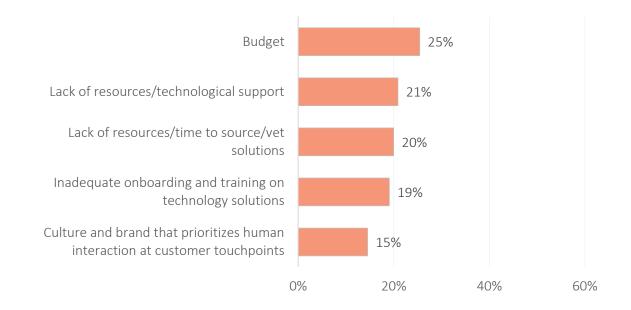


## Budget and Resources Considered Biggest Obstacles for New Tech Implementation

The number of obstacles faced by organizations when implementing new technology.



The most frequent obstacles faced by organizations.



### POV: Providers Discuss Obstacles

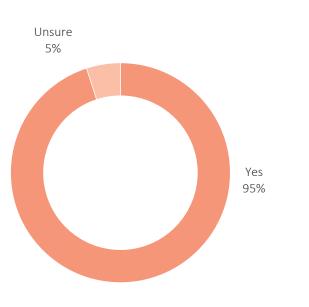
- ightarrow Adoption by the on-site teams and approval by the client(s).
- ightarrow Change aversion to software that redefines known/trusted workflows.
- ightarrow Resistance from multiple levels hard to provide data to support all arguments.
- $\rightarrow~$  Lack of vendor solutions' awareness of what problem they're solving for and how they fit into the PropTech ecosystem.
- ightarrow Pace hard to keep up with all the options and how fast they come out.
- ightarrow Supporting multiple PMS platforms and client databases.

- ightarrow Change management internally and integration with "stack", client alignment.
- → Being fully third-party we have a challenge with the amount of solutions being onboarded to meet various client needs. It's a major workload and something we are addressing by implementing a centralized vetting process for all new tech programs/platforms/vendors.
- ightarrow High talent turnover.
- ightarrow Too many solution dashboards to manage and maintain.
- ightarrow Lack of integration between systems.

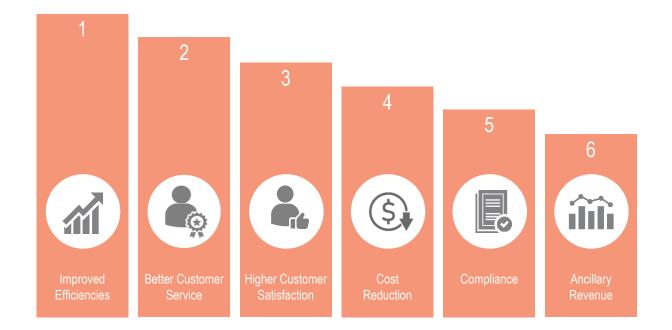


## **Defined Goals and Desired Outcomes**

When a new technology is added to your stack, do you define a goal or desired outcome?



Goals when implementing new technology (Ranked)



### POV: Providers Discuss Tech Goals

- ightarrow Integration capabilities and consolidating tech stack.
- $\rightarrow$  Peace of mind thanks to measurable (and predictable) performance at key stage gates along the lead-to-leave prospect/resident experience.
- $\rightarrow~$  Recruiting: Does our stack provide the opportunity to attract talent from additional candidate pools.
- ightarrow Brand differentiation.

- $\rightarrow$  Employee Morale.
  - ightarrow Impact on site team members.
  - ightarrow How we compare to industry peers using like technology.
  - ightarrow In general, ROI.
  - $\rightarrow~$  Creating "efficiencies" for our team member's time is very valuable to us.



### 2023 NMHC / RealFoundations Customer Experience (CX) Tech Report

## Scan the QR code to download the full report on the NMHC website:

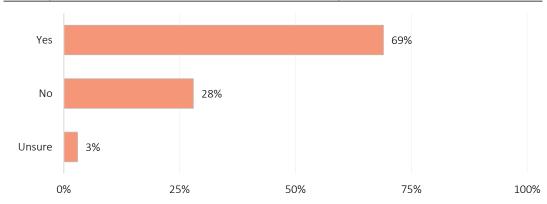




## Digitally-Supported Touring Experience

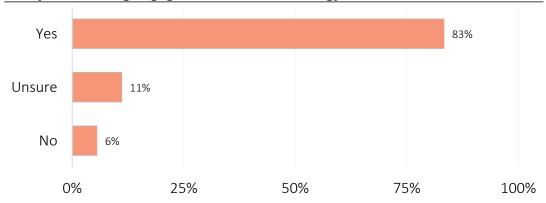


### Digitally-Supported Tour Solutions | Interactive Unit Availability Map

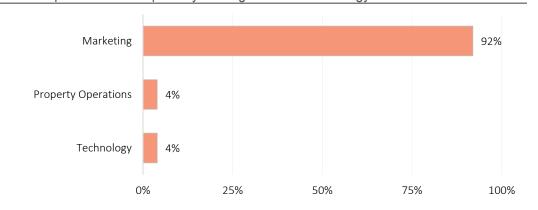


### Does your website offer an interactive unit availability map?

Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



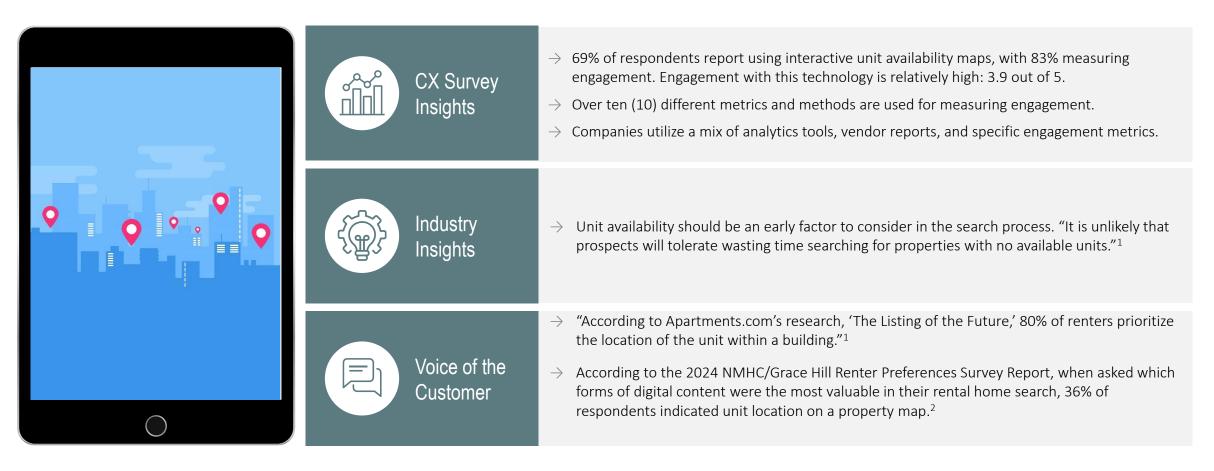
How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Tour Solutions: Interactive Unit Availability Map

An interactive unity availability map offers prospects a user-friendly way to assess the availability, location and other valuable unit attributes prior to moving on to the application process.



Source: <sup>1</sup>Rethinking Multifamily Websites (20for20), <sup>2</sup>2024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey

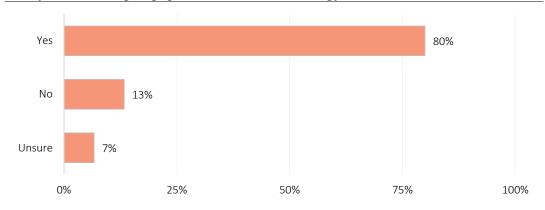


### Digitally-Supported Tour Solutions | Self-Guided Tours

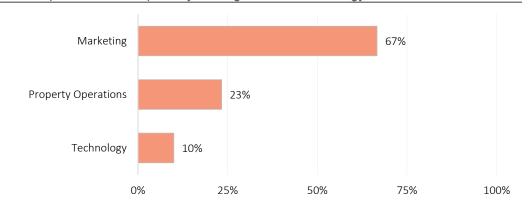
## Yes 72% No 23% Unsure 5% 5% 75% 100%

### Does your company offer self-guided tours?

Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



### Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



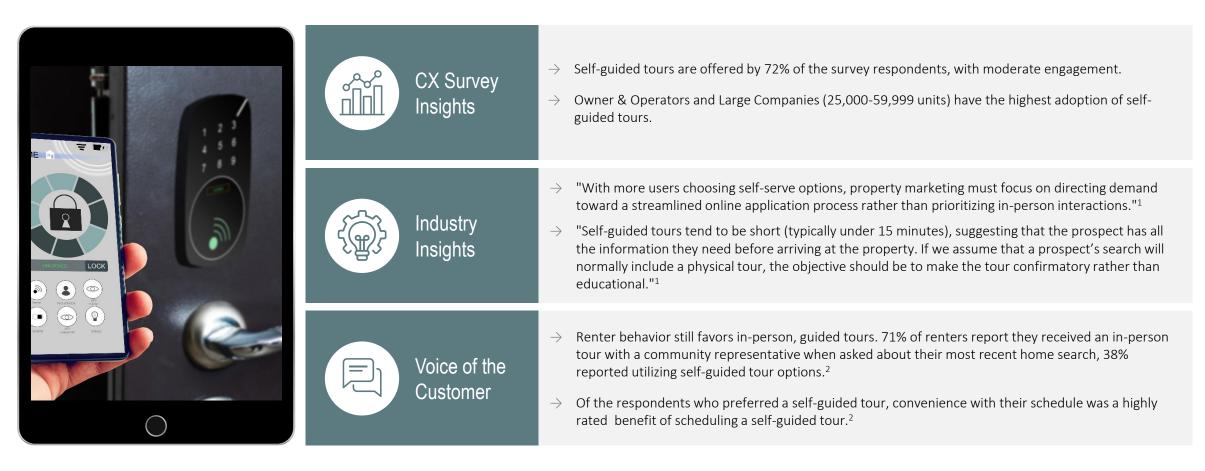
### How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Tour Solutions: Self-Guided Tours

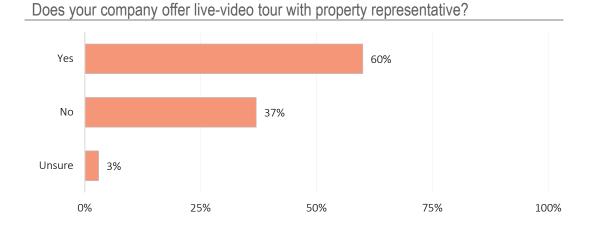
Self-guided tours provide a flexible and convenient property and unit viewing experience allowing a prospect to explore at their own pace, without the presence of a property staff member.



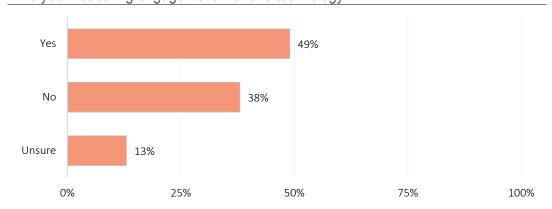
Source: <sup>1</sup>Rethinking Multifamily Websites (20for20), <sup>2</sup>2024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report



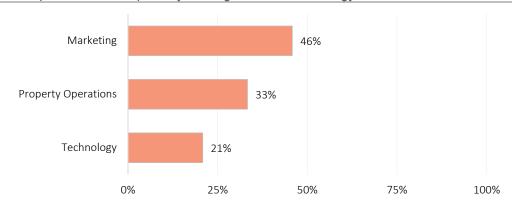
## Digitally-Supported Tour Solutions | Live-Video Tour with Property Representative



Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



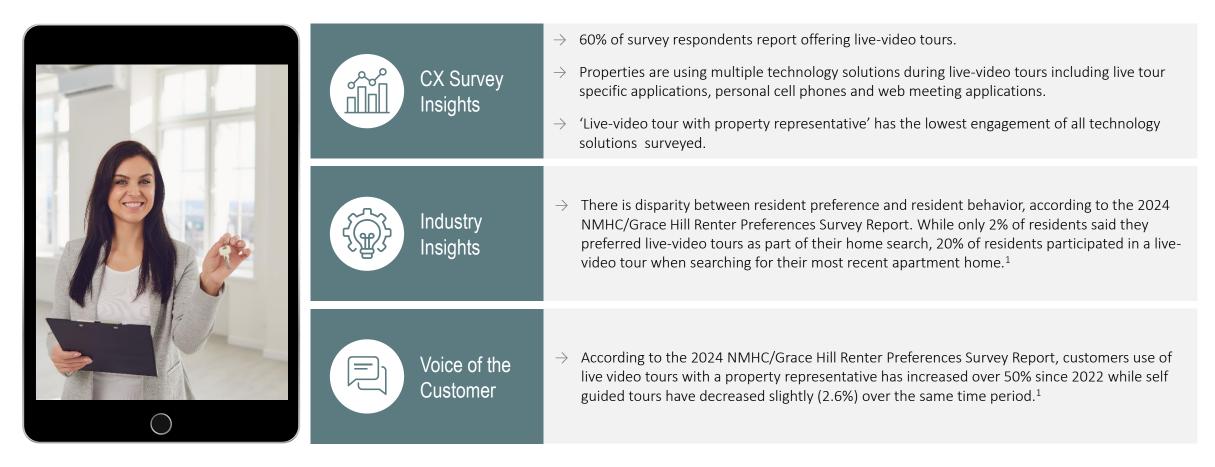
How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Tour Solutions: Live-Video Tour with Property Representative

A live-video tour with a property representative offers a real-time, interactive, virtual tour of the property through a video call or streaming application, in which the property representative guides the prospect through the physical property. This method combines the personal touch of a traditional property tour with the convenience of modern technology.



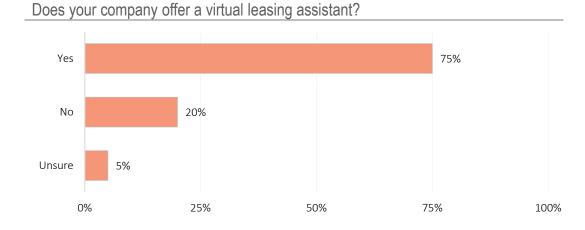
#### Source: <sup>1</sup>2024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report



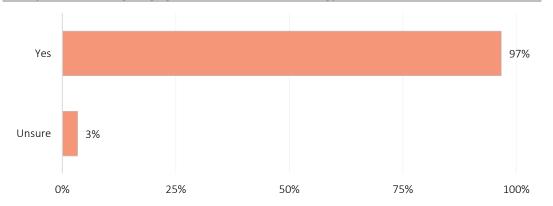
## Digitally- Supported Leasing Experience



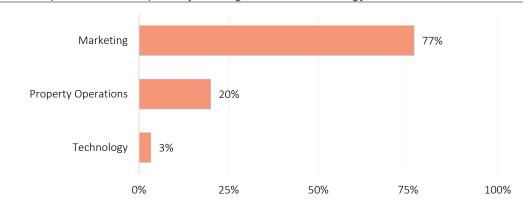
## Digitally-Supported Leasing Solutions | Virtual Leasing Assistant



Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



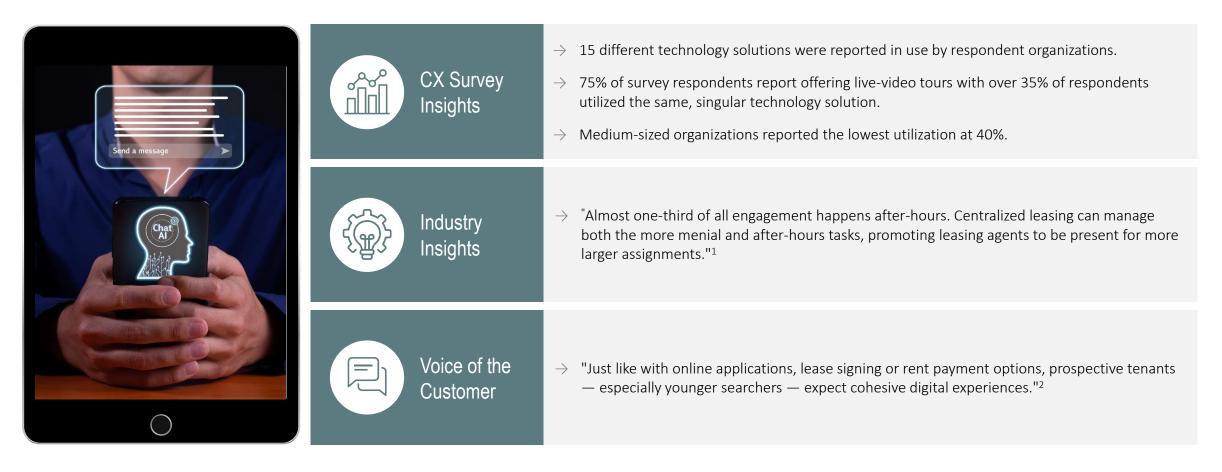
How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?





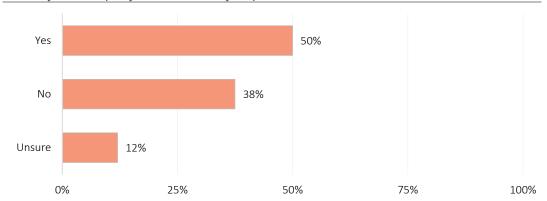
## Digitally-Supported Leasing Solutions: Virtual Leasing Assistant

A virtual leasing assistant offers prospects a user-friendly way to interact and engage with a chat-bot to deliver fast, automated, self-service Q&A during the customer journey.



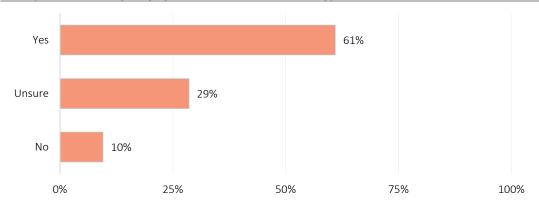


## Digitally-Supported Leasing | Security Deposit Alternative

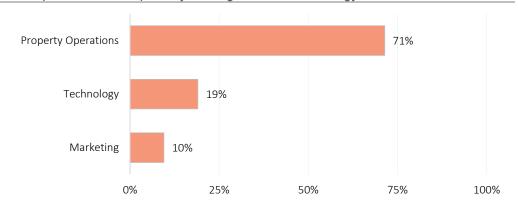


Does your company offer a security deposit alternative?

### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



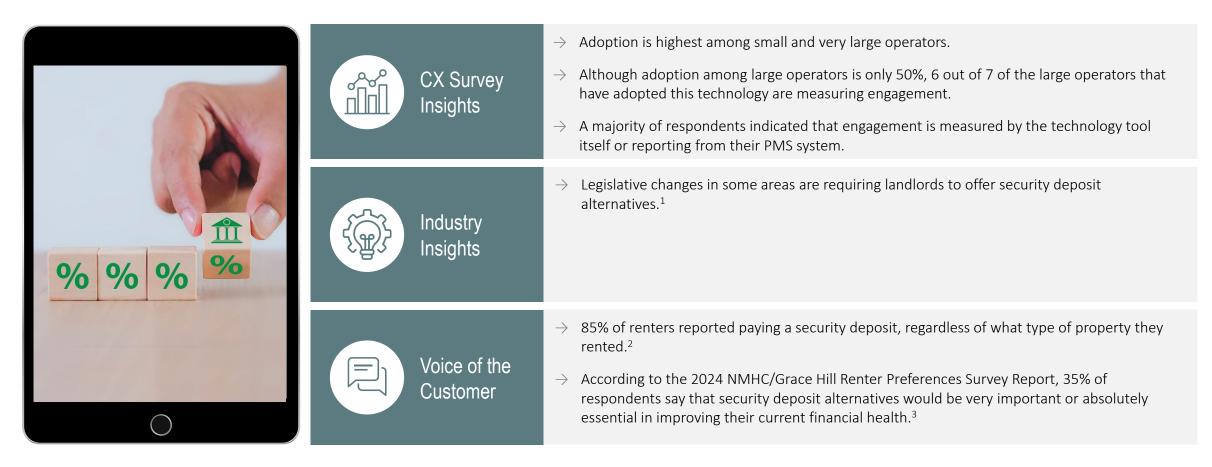
How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Leasing: Security Deposit Alternative

Security deposit alternatives provide financial flexibility which replaces the traditional security deposit payment requirements. These more affordable alternative methods benefit both prospects and property companies.



Source: <sup>1</sup>Coping with 2023's Multifamily Headwinds, <sup>2</sup>Zillow Consumer Housing Trends Report 2022, <sup>3</sup>2024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report

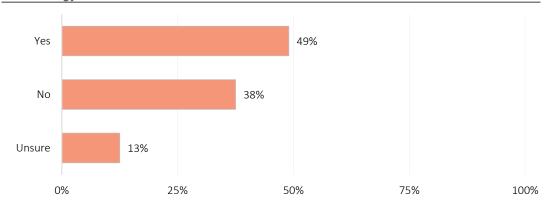


## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience

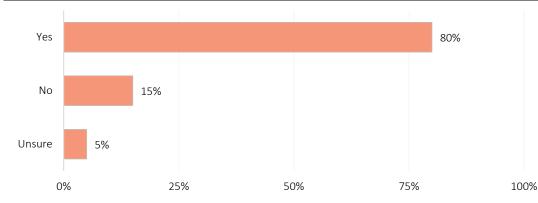


## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience | Move-In & Move-Out

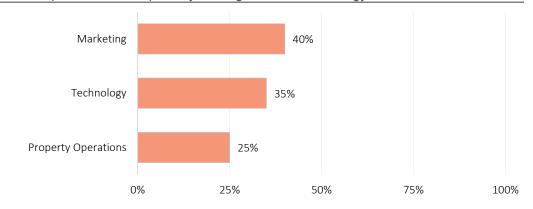
Do your properties offer resident onboarding through a move-in & move-out technology solution?



### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



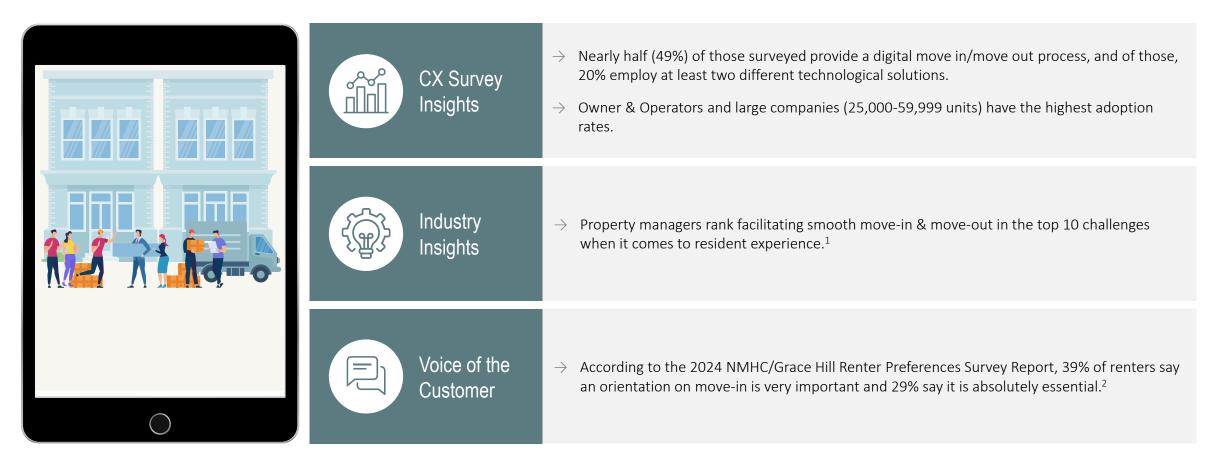
How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?



real foundations | MHC NUTRAL HOUSING

## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience: Move-In & Move-Out

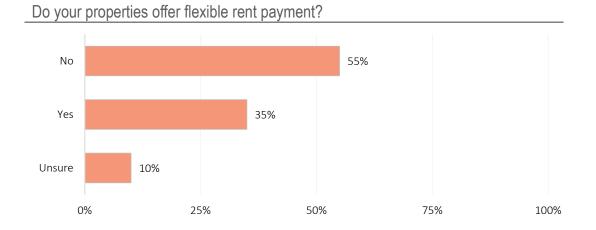
Move-in and move-out solutions streamline the process of progressing an approved applicant to an active resident while ensuring all associated tasks are handled efficiently by both the resident and the property staff.



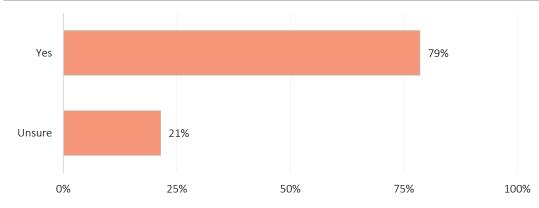
Source: 12023 Resident Experience Management Report (Zego), 22024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report

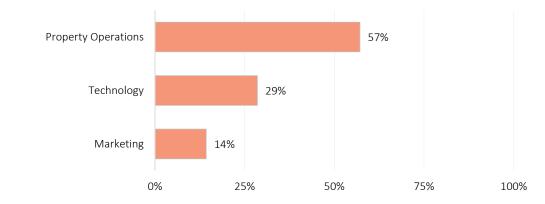


## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience | Flexible Rent Payment



### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?





### How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?

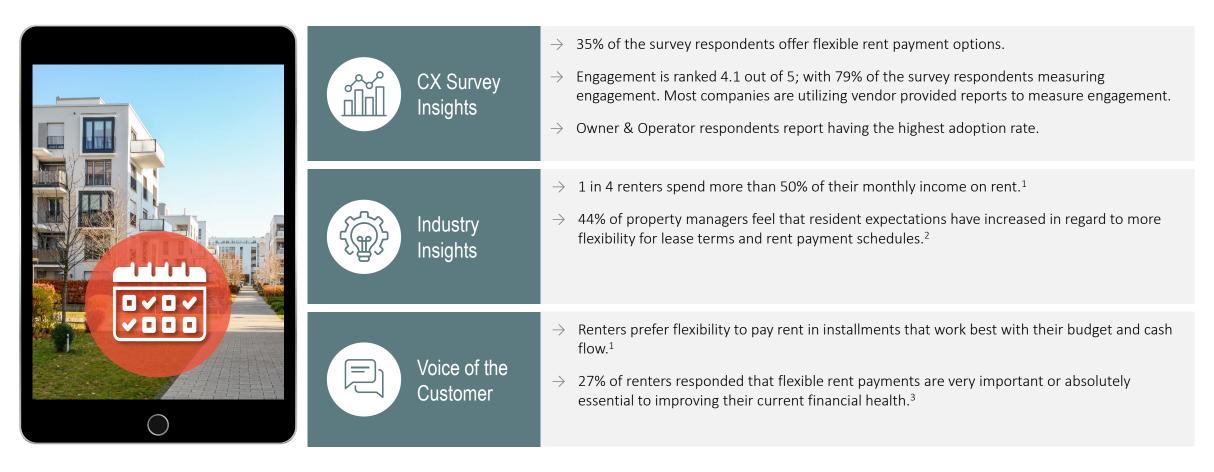


Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience: Flexible Rent Payment

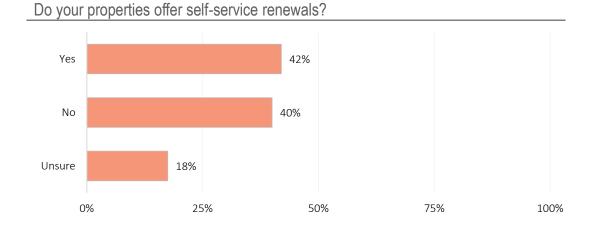
Flexible rent payment solutions offer rental payment options that provide renters with more adaptability and convenience than the traditional once-amonth payment structure. These valuable solutions cater to the diverse financial situations and preferences of the modern renter.



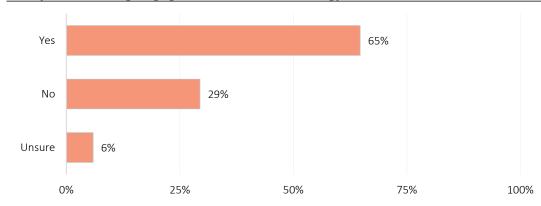
Source: 12ego, 22023 Resident Experience Management Report (Zego), 32024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report



## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience | Self-Service Renewals



Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Property Operations 70% Technology 24%

25%

50%

75%

100%

Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?

How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?

6%

0%

Marketing





## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience: Self-Service Renewals

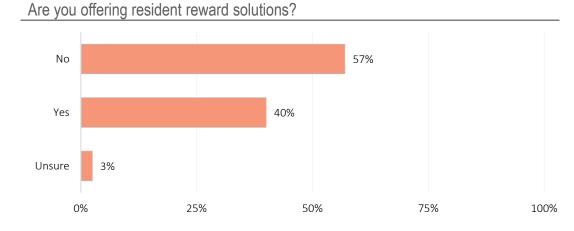
Self-service renewal applications empower a resident to manage the process of renewing their lease autonomously. This simplifies the renewal process for the property staff and enhances the overall resident experience.



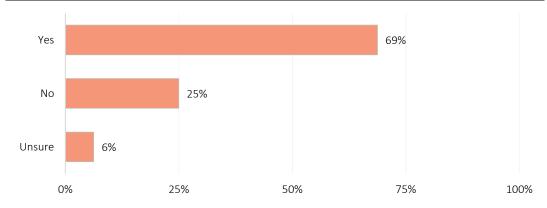
Source: 12023 Resident Experience Management Report (Zego), 22024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report

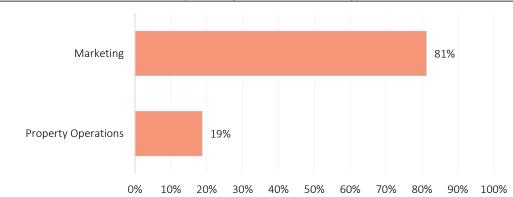


## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience | Resident Reward Solutions



### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?





Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?

How would you rank customer engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Resident Experience: Resident Reward Solutions

Resident reward solutions are platforms that incentivize and reward residents for various actions, behaviors, or milestones related to their tenancy. The goals of these solutions are to enhance resident satisfaction, encourage lease renewals, and strengthen the landlord-resident relationship.



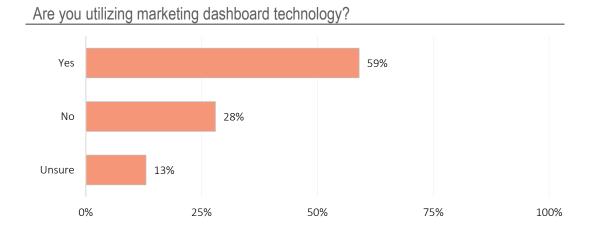
Source: <sup>1</sup>Apartment Companies Find Value in Rewards Programs, <sup>2</sup>How do you leverage technology and data to optimize and enhance your tenant loyalty program?



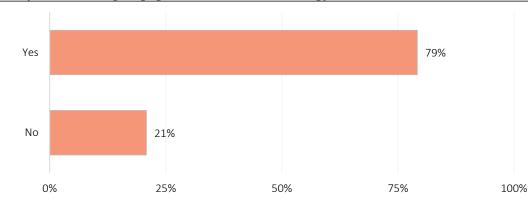
## Digitally-Supported Property Management Experience

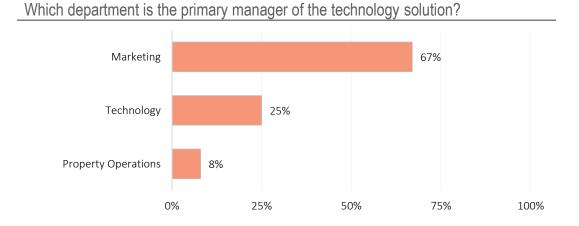


## Digitally-Supported Engagement Tracking | Marketing Dashboard



#### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?





How would you rank team member engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Engagement Tracking: Marketing Dashboard

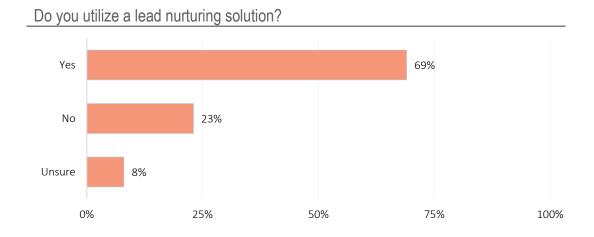
Marketing dashboards consolidate, display, and analyze marketing metrics and data related to multifamily assets and portfolios. This technology assists property owners and marketing teams in optimizing their marketing strategies, understanding customer behaviors and improving occupancy rates and customer satisfaction.



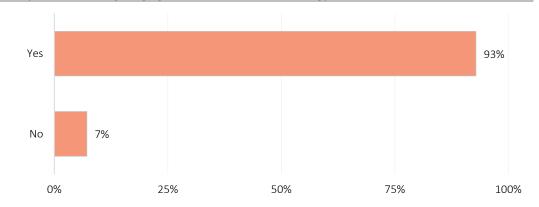
#### Source: <sup>1</sup>How Multifamily Centralization Boosts NOI, <sup>2</sup>State of MFH Marketing Guide

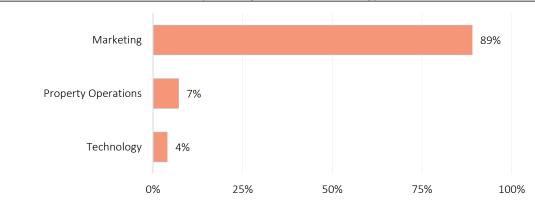


## Digitally-Supported Customer Engagement | Lead Nurturing



Are you measuring engagement with this technology?





Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?

How would you rank team member engagement with this technology?





## **Digitally-Supported Customer Engagement: Lead Nurturing**

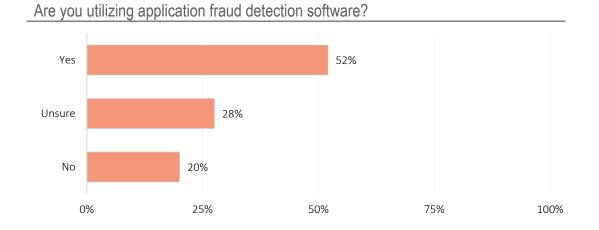
Lead nurturing technology provides engagement with a prospect through different touchpoints of the customer journey. Lead management offers a way to connect and build customer relationships.



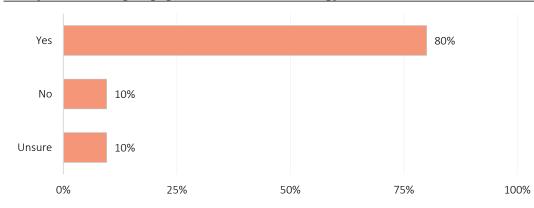
Source: 12023 Multifamily Trends Guide Rebecca Smith, WPM Real Estate Management, 2State of MFH Marketing Guide, 32024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey Report



### Digitally-Supported Applications | Fraud Detection Software



#### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Property Operations 67% Technology 33%

Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?

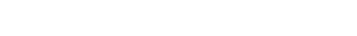
### How would you rank team member engagement with this technology?

25%

50%

0%





real

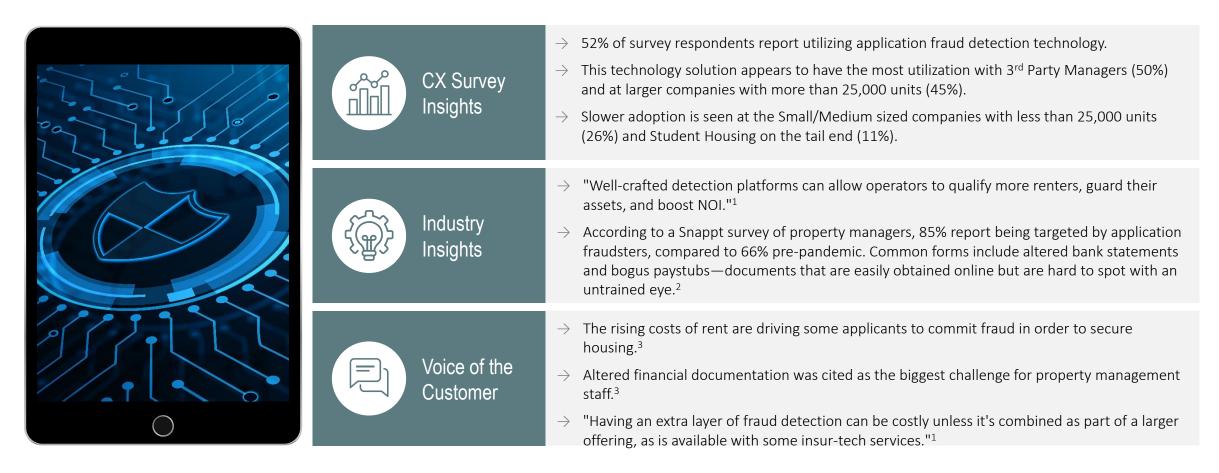
75%

100%

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

## **Digitally-Supported Applications: Fraud Detection Software**

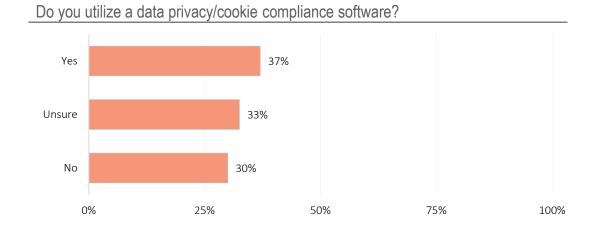
Fraud detection software provides services such as ID certification, document validation, and income verification to reduce the risk of fraud in the application process. These services protect companies from applicant fraud and financial losses and improve employee safety.



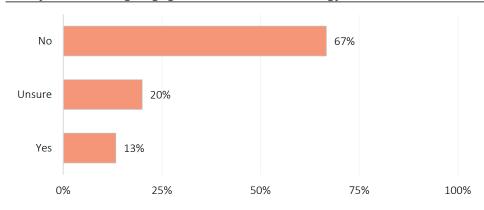
Source:<sup>1</sup>Coping with 2023's Multifamily Headwinds, <sup>2</sup>How Property Managers Can Combat Application Fraud, <sup>3</sup>Snappt 2022 State of Apartment Screening Survey



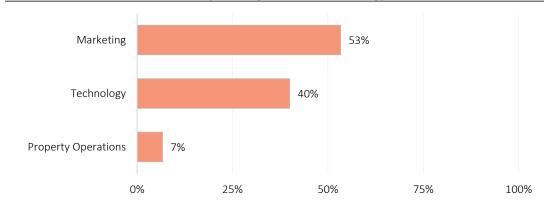
## Digitally-Supported Customer Experience | Data Privacy/Cookie Compliance



### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



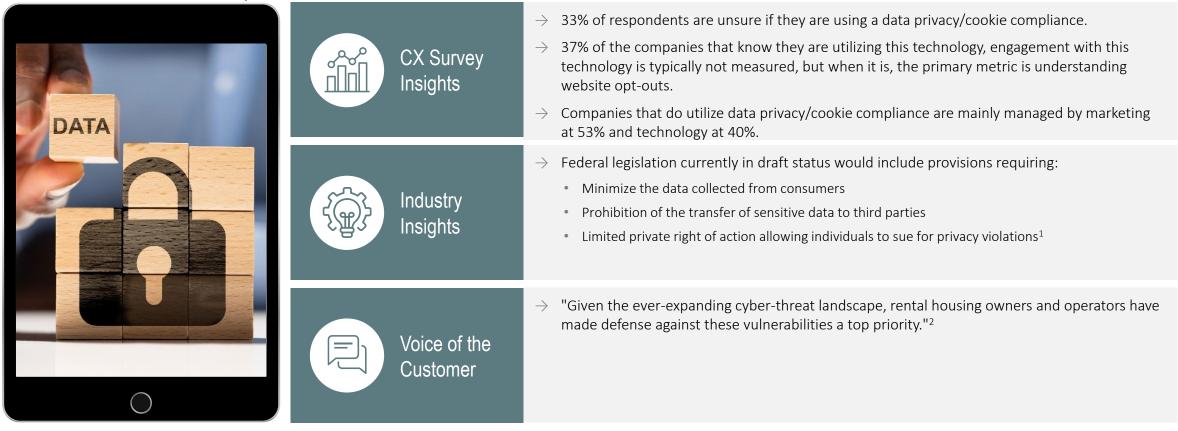
How would you rank team member engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Customer Experience: Data Privacy/Cookie Compliance

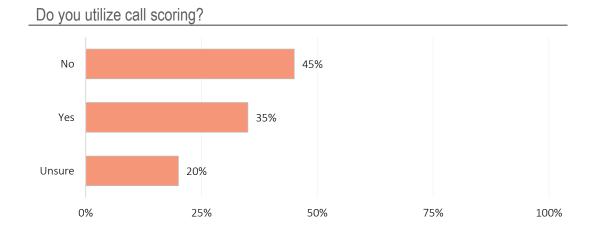
Data privacy and cookie compliance helps ensure the protection and proper handling of user data in accordance with privacy regulations while safeguarding user information, establishing trust with customers, mitigating legal risks, and avoiding potential fines or reputational damage associated with data breaches or non-compliance.



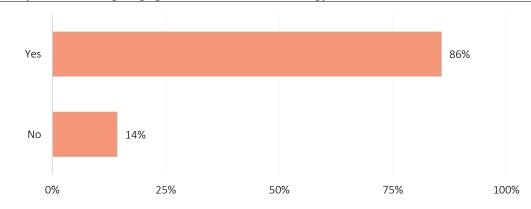
#### Source: <sup>1</sup>NMHC, <sup>2</sup>NMHC Data Security



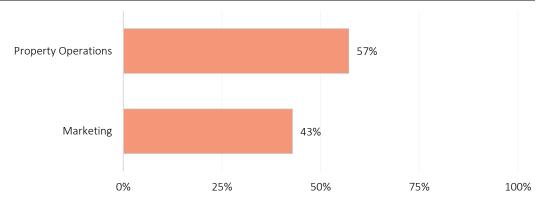
## Digitally-Supported Customer Experience | Call Scoring



### Are you measuring engagement with this technology?



Which department is the primary manager of the technology solution?



How would you rank team member engagement with this technology?





## Digitally-Supported Customer Experience: Call Scoring

Call scoring offers key performance indicators (KPI's) to measure the customer journey experience. A lead management platform with live call scoring metrics provides companies with real time results on how the property team interacts with prospects.



#### Source:<sup>1</sup>How Call Scoring is Changing the Leasing Process

