



Kenosha Landlord Association

A Local Chapter of the Wisconsin Apartment Association

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07/23/2013

DISCLAIMER: The Kenosha Landlord Association publishes this newsletter to create awareness of issues relating to the rental housing industry. Information is compiled from a variety of sources and the views and concerns expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the Association. When necessary, we suggest you consult an attorney.

How to Write Knockout Rental Ads on Craigslist

The days of classified ads in the news- paper are dwindling fast. Craigslist and online rental ad sites are chewing up the newspapers. Newspaper ad revenues, reports the Columbia Journalism Review in 2009 were at 1965 levels. And all reports show they continue to fall. After all, what landlord wants to pay \$200 to \$300 for a weekend ad of two or three lines when he can get a huge ad on Craigslist free? And according to doloop.com, Craigslist has 815,789,490 page views per month. It has become the default search source for rentals in many communities. Even if you are willing to pay, you can buy an equally large ad on one of the internet rental ad sites for \$40 that will stay up for weeks?

But beware; landlords can still get little or no response from a free Craigslist ad just as they can from a \$200 newspaper classified ad. No, the Craigslist ad didn't cost any money, but the property stills sits there vacant and producing no income. You run an ad to get your property rented, not just to hope someone calls. What we will look at here is how to actually get prospective tenants to look at your Craigslist ad, and, if you want them to, call about it.

Good advertising works because it effectively uses the A-I-D-A formula, Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. We will take each in order.

Attention

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Jay Abraham, famous marketing expert and consultant, writes in his book Getting Everything You Can Out of All

You've Got, "The headline is the most important part of the ad. We will spend more time on that than anything else. When you write or decide upon your headline—or its opening equivalent— you have spent at least 80 cents out of your dollar. Stated differently, 80 percent of your outcome—four-fifths of your result . . . all but 20 percent of the success of your selling effort is affected positively or negatively by how and what you communicate in the beginning. A change of headline can make a 20 times improvement in response or acceptance by your customer or prospect of your proposition. Every headline or opening statement should appeal to the prospect's or reader's or listener's self-interest. It should promise him or her a desirable, powerful, appealing benefit."

The headline is the ad for your ad.

It can be either positive or negative. It can appeal to security or fear, for example.

Then how can you create a knockout headline on Craigslist? Craigslist has four fields to enter information for the head- line, what prospective tenants see when they open up the page for rentals. First is the rent. That is important to use. Many prospective tenants look for rents they can afford. If no rental amount is listed, chances are they will go on to the next ad. If the rent is too high, they will also go on to the next ad, which is fine, since they couldn't or wouldn't rent the property, anyway.

The second field is number of bedrooms. That is a pull -down menu that allows you to select up to eight bedrooms. The third field is the headline itself. This is where you get to differentiate yourself from the rest of the ads. Some headlines

Here are some headlines that particularly attracted my attention. I am sure you can find more by going to Craigslist and look- ing at what other landlords have done.

\$625 / 1br – ESCAPE THE ORDINARY...

\$1395 / 2br – ~PACIFIC BEACH~ spacious ground

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How to Write Knockout Rental Ads on Craigslist

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floor condo. Quiet complex near bay!

\$965 / 1br – Bring Your Dog ! Central A/ C!! Dishwasher, Walk-in Closet, Large Rooms
\$645 / 1br – WE want YOU to live HERE! All Utilities Included

The most obvious mistake most people make when they write or create a headline is they forget the “YOU” attitude. To create

a powerful headline your message must telegraph benefits the prospective tenant him or herself can expect to receive. Never talk about “we” or “our” property or company. Nobody cares about us! So why would we even mention ourselves or our company in a headline? They care about themselves. Write each headline so it expresses the reader’s or prospective tenant’s selfish, direct interests.

The fourth field is “Specific Location.” That is where you can put the area of town or the cross-streets where the property is. Having that information also encourages only prospective tenants who are looking in that area to call. Just be sure that it is clear where you are talking about. In the Tucson Craigslist rental ads I saw a “specific location” that said “District 16.” I live in the Tucson area, have for 11 years, and have no idea where District 16 is. So much for calls about that property.

Remember, the same ad can generate no response or make the phone ring off the hook, can get calls that are useless or calls that result in showings. We’ll discuss more about the importance of that later.

1. One headline can outdraw up to 10 times better than another (Jay Abraham says 20 times, and he may be right)

2. Headlines should show a benefit to get attention

Test the headlines

You can’t manage what you don’t measure, wrote Peter Drucker. That means test, test, test. The most important thing to test is headlines. As mentioned above, headlines are 80% of your advertising benefit and dollar.

Running ads free on Craigslist means that you can test to your heart’s content. Run the same ad with three different headlines and see which one pulls the best.

Craigslist allows placing the same ad every 48 hours. However, with a little creativity, you can place an ad for the same property simultaneously. What you will need to do is use a different email address and phone number. To get a new email address, go to yahoo.com, rocketmail.com, gmail or one of the others and make yourself a new email address. Use your home phone and cell phone numbers. And if you need a third one, use your spouse’s cell phone number.

Keep track of which headline pulls best. Use the chart on page three to do that or make one yourself. The number of telephone calls isn’t necessarily the best measure; the number of people who are actually interested is. The phone may ring a lot for one headline, but nobody wants to see the property. It may ring far less often for another one, but everyone who calls wants to see it.

Interest

People read ads that have something that attracts them. We have to give a prospect a reason to mark our ad. They are looking for a specific feature or features. The interest part is where we tell them about the property. Bedrooms, baths, square feet,

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Landlord Refusing To Rent

HUD CHARGES NEW JERSEY LANDLORDS

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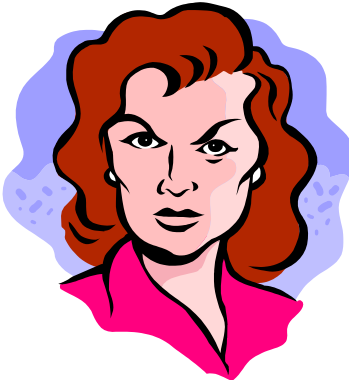
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today that it has charged the owners of two apartment buildings in North Arlington, New Jersey, with violating the Fair Housing Act for allegedly denying rental opportunities to African Americans.

HUD's charge alleges that Michael Pontoriero, an owner of the buildings, refused to show apartments to or return the calls of a prospective tenant after learning that he is African American, and that Pontoriero repeated these and other discriminatory behaviors against African Americans in four separate tests conducted by the Fair Housing Council of Northern New Jersey (FHCNNJ).

The Fair Housing Act makes it unlawful to refuse to rent or impose different rental terms or conditions on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status.

HUD brings this charge on behalf of the prospective tenant and FHCNNJ, a non-profit fair housing organization that receives funding from HUD to investigate claims of discrimination, after both filed complaints with the Department.

According to HUD's charge, an African-American man contacted Pontoriero to inquire about an apartment he saw listed for rent. Pontoriero initially scheduled a time to show him the apartment and confirmed the appointment minutes before, but failed to appear, allegedly after learning the man is African American. Believing that Pontoriero did not show him the unit because of his race, the man contacted FHCNNJ, which conducted four paired tests using a white tester and a black tester in each test. The tests revealed that Pontoriero refused to show up for appointments and return calls after he learned that a tester was African American. Pontoriero allegedly would drive by or arrive to the appointment early in order to discover a prospective renter's race. The charge alleges further that when he did show a unit to African-American testers, he did not accompany the tester room-to-room and point out the apartment's features or



provide an application as he did with white testers, and he actively discouraged black testers from applying to rent the property. In addition, he allegedly quoted a black tester a monthly rent of \$100 more for a one-bedroom unit than he quoted a white tester.

"Testing is a critical tool in exposing discriminatory treatment that might otherwise go undetected," said Bryan Greene, HUD Acting Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "HUD and its fair housing partners will continue to utilize trained testers to identify and end unlawful housing discrimination."

The HUD charge will be heard by a United States Administrative Law Judge unless any party to the charge elects to have the case heard in federal district court. If an administrative law judge finds after a hearing that discrimination has occurred, he may award damages to both the individual and FHCNNJ. The judge may also order injunctive relief and other equitable relief to deter further discrimination, as well as payment of attorney fees. In addition, the judge may impose fines in order to vindicate the public interest, or if the matter is decided in federal court, the judge may award punitive damages.

Persons who believe they have experienced discrimination may file a complaint by contacting HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at [\(800\) 669-9777](tel:8006699777) (voice) or [\(800\) 927-9275](tel:8009279275) (TTY). Housing discrimination complaints may also be filed at www.hud.gov/fairhousing or by downloading HUD's free housing discrimination mobile application, which can be accessed through Apple devices, such as the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch.

HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination; and transform the way HUD does business.

More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and <http://espanol.hud.gov>. You can also follow HUD on twitter @HUDnews, on facebook at www.facebook.com/HUD, or sign up for news alerts on [HUD's News Listserv](#).

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TENANT SCREENING: THREE TIPS FOR FINDING BETTER RENTERS



By [Tracey March](#) Date: 7-13-2013

Tenants who have poor credit or an otherwise bad rental history

often seek out the smaller landlords, in the hopes that these rental owners won't delve too deeply into their sordid details. Experienced rental owners understand that finding good tenants is critical to their success, which is why they often [hire property management companies](#) or screening companies to help them find reliable and considerate renters. If you do your own [tenant screening](#), here are three tips to help you identify the pernicious tenants who will try to slide in under your radar:

1. Check the rental application

Typically we think checking the application means following up later on references and verifying credit report information – and those are important, so do them. But here we mean check the rental application as soon as the applicant gives it to you.

Focus on three things:

- Look for empty spaces that should have been filled out. For example, make sure there is a birth date and social security number, or you won't be able to run a credit report.

- Look for language that indicates the application was not properly filled out, such as “don't remember” under the previous landlord's name. Make sure the responses are legible.


If an application isn't filled out correctly, completely, or legibly, hand it back and let the rental applicant know you can't process it until it is.

2. Verify the application information.

Do a “Social Search” on the applicant's social security number using a tenant screening service such as [Transunion's MySmartMove web-based service](#). Results will show you addresses associated with a social security number, so it's a great way of verifying your applicant's rental history. In addition, sometimes social searches reveal that more than one person is using the same social security number – a sign that the applicant is either the victim or perpetrator of an identity theft.

Also, cross-reference the

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Continued from page 3 balconies, yard size, parking, amenities, etc. Think about the Yellow Pages ads. Looking at an ad in the Yellow Pages we are most likely to call the company that specifically mentions what we are looking for. The single-line Yellow Pages listings are a crap shoot, and calling that company could well end up being useless.

Here's the best part about being able to put lots of information in a Craigslist ad. The more information you include, the less likely they are to call. This is where you self-qualify. If you are answering the phone yourself, chances are you don't want a slew of unqualified prospects calling. What I mean by unqualified is not so much people who wouldn't pass screening but people for whom your property simply wouldn't work. Their calling you simply wastes both your and their time. That means to have only qualified people calling, put as much information in the ad as possible.

If you are a property manager and have several properties available or are a manager and live on site, you want the phone to ring a lot, so less information may do better.

Pictures

Take lots of pictures with a digital camera. Take them from the outside and the inside. Take them from several angles so you are assured a good shot. Then, if you have a photo editor on your computer, clean up the picture so people can actually

make out all the details and it doesn't include a extraneous material. That can mean lightening or darkening it and cropping it to best show off your property.

If you don't have such software, you can download one free. It is truly simple to touch up a digital picture, and you will be amazed at how much difference you can make in a photograph in just a few minutes.

Upload at least four pictures to your Craigslist ad.

Testing Your Ads: Ad Headline / Number of Calls/
Number of Showings

Desire is created by value-loaded words, such as adjectives and adverbs. Desire is what encourages people to take action. Jazz up your copy with words such as beautiful, well-maintained, exciting, fantastic, etc., and those will create desire that simple descriptions will not.

I visited Craigslist for San Diego and found some good examples of desire-creating language. One ad said, "Sophisticated and Elegant," "Luxurious, fully furnished suites," "Rooftop sundeck with panoramic views," and "Surrounded by numerous shops, restaurants, cultural destinations." Isn't that much better than, fully-furnished, views, and close to shopping and restaurants? (Yes, only rich people can afford to rent there.)

Action

This is where you get people to do what you want them to do. However, you have to tell them specifically what it is you want them to do. So instead of just putting your phone number, 123-4567, write Call 123-4567; and add the words, "but hurry."

Why put "but hurry" in the ad?

Eighty percent of people buy for fear of loss. Obviously, we would want a prospective tenant to "hurry" because we want to get the property rented. But only the most cynical would think that way if they saw "but hurry." Most would think, "oh, it must have gotten a lot of calls, so if I don't hurry, I'll miss out." That's fear of loss.

Also it is your last chance to sell. In addition, add one of the following: "References checked carefully," or "So our properties remain great places to live, we check references care-

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applicant's prior addresses with county tax records and you'll be able to find the landlord's name and address so you can verify that the landlord contact information given to you is correct. If the prior addresses were for apartment buildings, look them up in the phone book or do an Internet search to verify the property manager's phone number.

3. Meet and get a completed application and picture ID from all adults planning to live in the rental property.

Insist on actually meeting all adults who plan to live in your rental home. You need to know who you are renting to and that your renters are who they say they are. Make an exception for spouses deployed in the military. In that case, get evidence of the spouse's military service.

Be sure to get copies of picture identification, which typically will be a driver's license. With the license you can verify the applicant is the person in the

picture, and you can verify the address.

One final note: when it comes to tenant screening, always comply with federal and state [fair housing laws](#).

Tenant screening is one of the most important things you do as a landlord. Having good tenants means rental income and a well-maintained rental property. Do you have any tips or insights about tenant screening.

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fully.” That last entry is one of your best selling points.

It encourages good tenants to call, since they absolutely don't want to live next door to bad tenants. And it encourages bad tenants to go on to the next ad because they know that if a landlord screens them, they'll be rejected.

Proofreading

Making sure your ad is correct is vital. What are the two most important items? First and most important is your phone number. If your phone number is wrong, it doesn't matter how powerful your headline is, how appealing to emotions your body copy is, or how compelling your action line is, the ad is wasted.

The second most important is the address of the property, assuming you put the address in the ad.

Proofreading the ad is best done by more than one person. It is truly a challenge to proofread your own creations; take my word for it. I know what I mean when I write an article, and so that's what I see when I proofread it. Always make sure to check the phone number and address, though. But then, have someone else read the ad, too.

Should the Address be in the Ad?

There are times when you should definitely put the property address in the ad. As mentioned above, it is when you don't

want prospective tenants wasting your time or theirs. Too often people will call about a property having no idea where it is. Then after you tell them, they have no interest. Putting the address in the ad is another way of self-selecting. Remember, you have to be “up” for every call about the property. The fewer the calls, the less likely you are to blow one of the responses to your ad.

When you definitely don't want to put the address in the ad is when the address gives a false impression about the property. In a classified ad class I did a few years ago, one landlord said that his property is in a good neighborhood, but the address is near a street that has a bad reputation. His property is at the other end of the street from the bad part.

You can do two things in a situation such as that, one, leave the address out and have a good story to explain what a good neighborhood it is. Or two, put it in, but use the address as a twist, or an item of interest, such as “The best part of Slum Blvd” or “You didn't know this neighborhood existed.”

Another time would be when it is a single-family dwelling and you are afraid the current tenants will be bothered. Chances are no one would knock on the door and ask to see inside, but there are some presumptuous people who would do just that. They might also wander around the yard and peek in windows.

Craigslist is free in that it costs no money to run an ad there. But if your ad doesn't produce results, it isn't free at all. You have lost the income from the rent you might have and you have had to pay the mortgage and taxes for the period of time the property might have been rented to a first-class applicant.

By all means, run the ads free on Craigslist. Just pretend that it's costing \$200 for the weekend and do an outstanding job.

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HUD settles case for a son with disabilities



HUD ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT WITH BALTIMORE CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Agreement settles allegations of discrimination against mother and son with disabilities

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today a [settlement agreement](#) with the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) after a resident complained the housing authority failed to make a reasonable accommodation for a family with a young son with special needs. HABC will pay \$150,000 to the public housing resident as part of the Voluntary Compliance Agreement.

The resident alleged that the housing authority failed to grant her request to be transferred to a larger unit that was closer to family support. The resident and her young son are persons with disabilities who needed a larger unit near family members who could assist in caring for them. The [Fair Housing Act](#) requires housing providers to make reasonable accommodations in their rules, policies, practices or services when needed to provide persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling. In addition, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 makes it unlawful for any federally funded housing program to deny program benefits to an individual based on a disability.

“Requests for reasonable accommodations that are needed by persons with disabilities must be taken seriously and receive timely responses,” said Jane C.W. Vincent, HUD’s Regional Administrator of the mid-Atlantic region. “HUD will continue to investigate the causes of delays in granting reasonable accommodation requests and take action when we determine that they were unnecessary.”

According to the HUD complaint, the resident made several requests over a four-year period to be transferred to a four-bedroom unit that was closer to her family support system. She also provided doctor’s letters indicating that the requested transfer would ameliorate her son’s disability and her multiple disabilities. Among other things, her son’s doctor recommended a larger unit so that the child, who is susceptible to viral infections due to asthma, would not have to share a bedroom with his siblings. Additionally, the mother raised concerns about mold and pests and the lack of air and heat controls in the two-bedroom unit they occupied at the time. Still, the housing authority failed to grant her requests until several months after she filed a complaint with HUD.

Under the terms of the agreement, HABC will pay the mother \$150,000 and pay her attorneys \$10,000. To ensure that future reasonable accommodation requests are properly addressed, HABC will also post signage that details its reasonable accommodation policy and procedures, train staff and property managers on how to comply with reasonable accommodation requests, and submit regular reports to HUD on its efforts to promptly respond to reasonable accommodation requests.

Persons who believe they have experienced discrimination may file a complaint by contacting HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at (800) 669-9777 (voice) or (800) 927-9275 (TTY). Housing discrimination complaints may also be filed by going to www.hud.gov/fairhousing, or by downloading HUD’s free housing discrimination mobile application, which can be accessed through Apple devices such as the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch.

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More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and <http://espanol.hud.gov>. You can also follow HUD on twitter [@HUDnews](https://twitter.com/HUDnews), on facebook at www.facebook.com/HUD, or sign up for news alerts on [HUD’s News Listserv](#).

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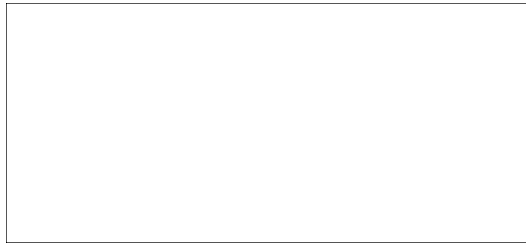


Kenosha Landlord Association

P.O. Box 1505

Kenosha, Wisconsin 53141

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Next Meeting

VFW

6618-39th Ave

On our regular
3rd Wednesday the month

August 21, 2013

6:30 P.M. for food

7:00 P.M. for meeting

Appetizers & Networking at 6:30 pm Meeting will start at 7 pm

Ron With

Emergency Fire

&

Water

Restoration

www.kenoshalandlordassociation.ws

Free Food Or Snacks Provided At Meetings