



MAINTENANCE SURVEY: *Operations, Tools, Technology, and Insights*

A Collaborative Study Conducted for Service Team Training
by Swift Bunny



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Key Findings	5
Systems and Applications	8
Work Orders	11
Office Staff Quandary	14
The Resident Experience	16
Training and Support	20
What About the Basics?	24
Conclusion	27
About this Study	29
About the Authors	33



Introduction

Introduction



Maintenance professionals are the backbone of rental housing communities—yet they're also the hardest roles to fill and keep.

Industry leaders report that maintenance teams experience the highest turnover and present the greatest hiring challenges among all on site positions. The stakes are high: without fully staffed, high performing maintenance teams, service quality declines and net rental income is at risk. Alarmingly, one-third of apartment communities nationwide are operating without a complete maintenance staff.

So, what's working—and what isn't—when it comes to supporting, recruiting, and retaining these essential team members? Read on to uncover the insights.



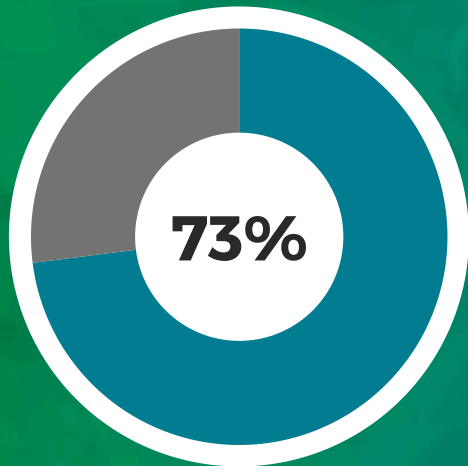


Key Findings

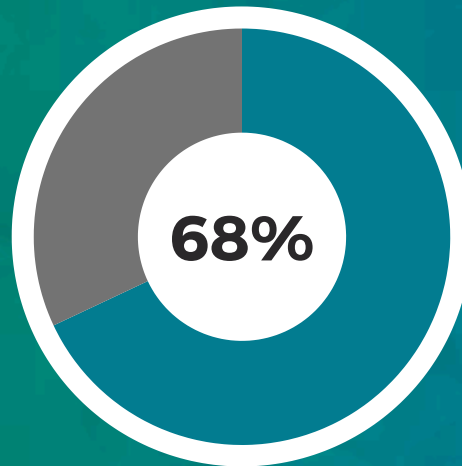
This groundbreaking study revealed strengths, but more importantly, it uncovered areas that require attention to their potential impact on property and portfolio performance:

- **Training/Maintenance Staff:** Service team members desire more instruction on how to help residents regarding resident portals and household appliances
- **Training/Office Staff:** Service team members wish the office staff was better equipped to help residents take care of basic service request issues themselves to reduce unnecessary maintenance visits
- **Move-In Resources/Residents:** Provide online and printed training materials for residents regarding using and maintaining their various household appliances and systems and how to use the resident portal

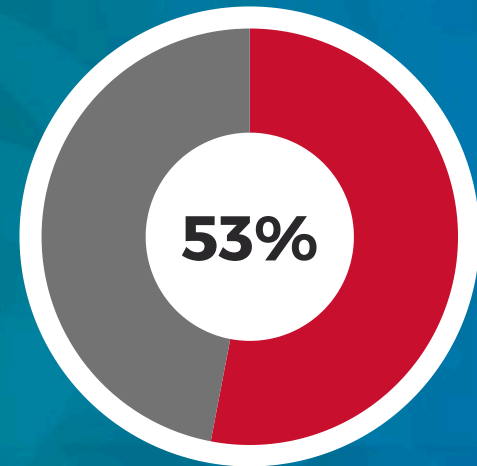
Technology OK, but **Not Great**



"The technologies I use at work help me do my job"



"Technologies I use at work have a positive impact on my satisfaction as an employee"



UNFORTUNATELY... only 53% agree that technologies used at work reduce their stress



"The integration between [Tech provider] (which great in itself) and [Tech provider] (also great) has not been ideal. It negates the efficiency gained by either of these programs on their own, because both databases have to be checked and updated independently, leading to details missed and admin work done twice."

- Anonymous Maintenance Team Member

➔ What You Can Do

Ask for input from your maintenance team members regarding technologies your company uses or is considering implementing in your portfolio. Currently, **only 38% of maintenance team members are asked for their opinions**, but they are the ones who have to put the systems into use. This disconnect can lead to frustration and resentment, in addition to system underutilization or duplication of tasks.

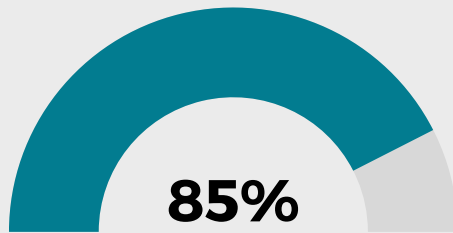




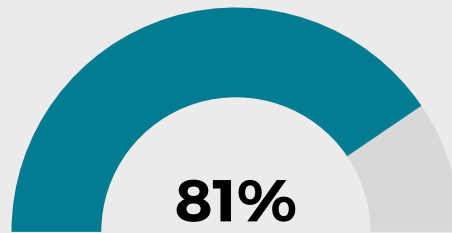
Systems and Applications

Mostly Positive with One Glaring Opportunity

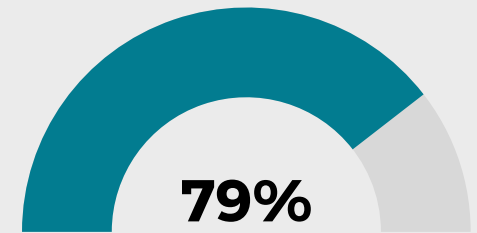
How much do you agree that the following helps you work more efficiently?



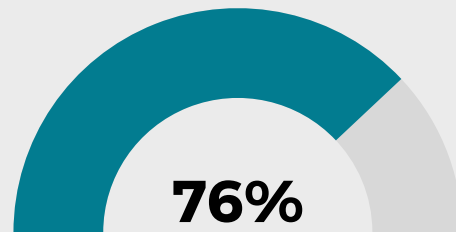
Online work orders



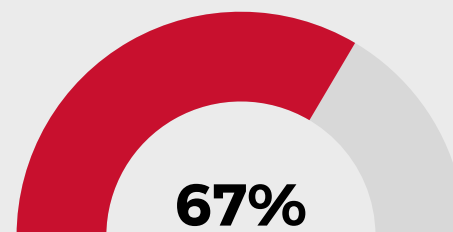
Key control system



Facilities application
(inspections, preventative maintenance, automated routine tasks, etc.)



Property management system



Resident portal





What Are They Saying?



“Few, if any, engage in the resident portal.”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member



“A lot of our residents don’t speak English and can’t navigate the site.”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member



“Residents don’t know what they are doing and don’t like it. (portal)”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member



Work Orders

A Mixed Bag

Some Successes:

96%

of communities offer residents the ability to submit online works orders

82%

agree online work orders are a more effective way to handle resident requests

80%

agree online work orders help them work more efficiently

Though, 71% share that being able to include multiple repairs on the same service request would be helpful

A Mixed Bag

On the Other Hand:

49%

At move-in, residents **are not provided** with instructions on how to use their home appliances and systems

37%

Instructions provided to residents **are not** clear and concise

33%

Residents **are not provided** with instructions on how to use the online work order system



“At the community I work at we have 5 apps that the residents have to download to use all of the things we offer, and they complain that it would make it easier if some of them were put together instead of so many apps.”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member



Office Staff Quandary

Help Me Help You



50%

Office staff has not been trained on how to help residents fix common, easily resolved service issues themselves

1 in 3

Maintenance team members reported being interrupted more than 6 times per day



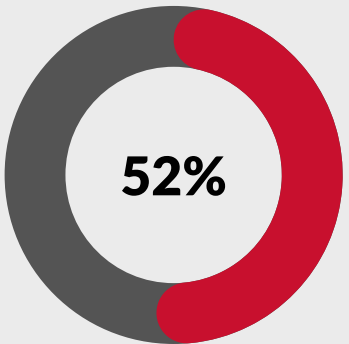
"Numerous hours of my work week is spent completing remedial tasks which the residents 100% could do on their own. The front office does not put any effort into asking maintenance how to perform these tasks, they just tell the resident to submit work orders. This floods our work order systems with orders that takes valuable time away from important work orders and tasks."

- Anonymous Maintenance Team Member

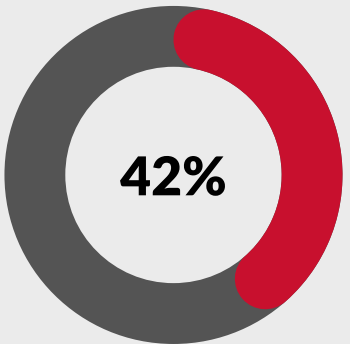


The Resident Experience

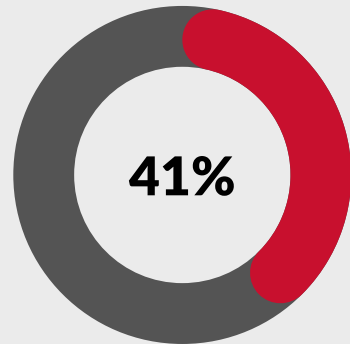
Ample Room for Improvement



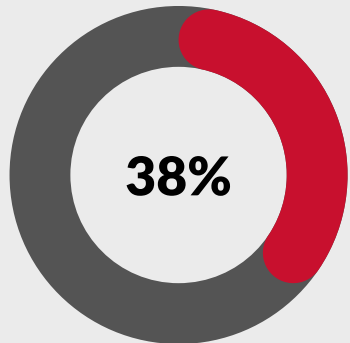
“I **have not been trained** on how to provide support to residents regarding technology.”



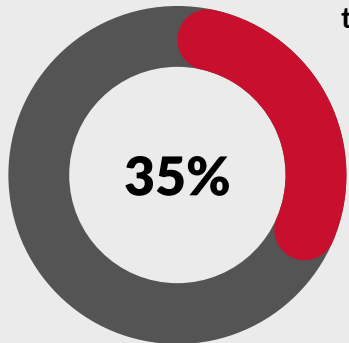
“Residents **complain** about the technologies the community uses.”



“I have to spend time with residents explaining or helping them with how to use our technology.”



“The office staff **has not been trained** to provide support to residents regarding technology.”



“The technology we use does **not help us improve** the resident experience.”



What Are They Saying?



“Some of the smart functions don't need to be smart, like thermostats for example. We have 4 different kinds of thermostats and one of them has an app that needs to be downloaded. This would be one that receives consistent requests for help figuring out.”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member



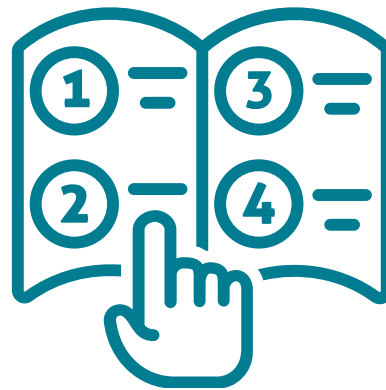
“(I hear that) it is not as user friendly as it should be, and often not functional from mobile devices, which is inconvenient for older residents that aren't as tech savvy, and younger residents that often don't own computers.”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member

➔ What You Can Do

Identify the top five service requests that residents can easily solve themselves and teach the office staff how to talk residents through the troubleshooting steps (such as pushing the reset button on a garbage disposal or electrical outlet). This reduces the number of trips a maintenance technician must take during a workday, saving hours per week for the maintenance team and improving the speed at which other resident requests and tasks may be resolved.

Create FAQ one-sheets and videos for your residents that provide the basic steps in using the community technology, such as how to log in and navigate the resident portal and how to program the thermostat.





Training and Support

Areas Needing Attention

41%

“My company does not do a good job providing training for new technologies I need to use for work”

39%

“My company does not do a good job implementing new technologies I need to use for work”

34%

“I do not receive the support needed when technology challenges arise”

29%

“Training has not helped me be more effective at doing my job”



Emerging Risk

TWO-THIRDS

of technicians report receiving less than 1 hour of training per month on average





What Are They Saying?

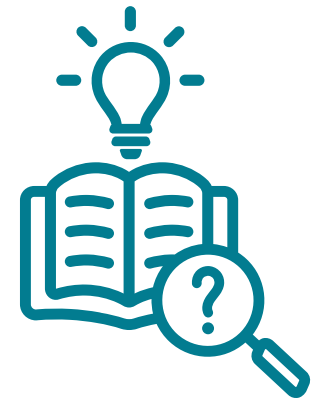


“Training for maintenance, most of it is for supervisors and isn't even actual training, just meetings about company policies. We need classes for techs. With the state of the hiring pool/workforce, we're relying more and more on hiring people new to the industry with no skills, and absorbing all of that training on-site is a pretty massive burden when most properties are already understaffed and behind.”

-Anonymous Maintenance Team Member

➔ What You Can Do

Supplier partners want their clients to be successful in the use of their technology, so lean on them for help. Your maintenance technology partners can provide support and training to ensure your service team members understand what the technology is intended to accomplish, how to use it, and who to contact if something is not working. Request that your technology partners hold “train the trainer” sessions to equip on-site employees in providing support to residents; consider repeating training throughout the year to train your new hires. Ask your supplier partners to provide “how to” resources for residents.





What About the Basics?

Missing Tools of the Trade

The role of maintenance team members is to fix things, but do they have what they need to get the job done? Those surveyed say there is room for improvement.

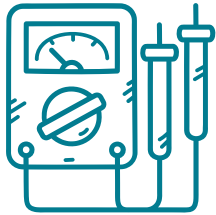
Of the tools not provided, which would be most helpful for their work?

27%

Do not have all the tools, equipment, and technologies needed to do their job

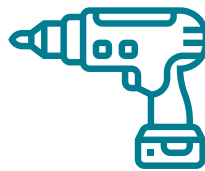
48%

Multimeter



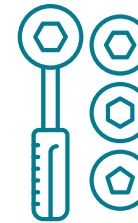
44%

Cordless Drill



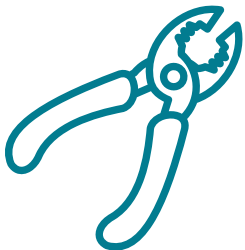
42%

Socket Set



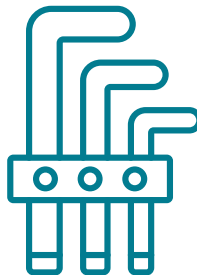
41%

Wire Strippers



41%

Allen Wrench Set



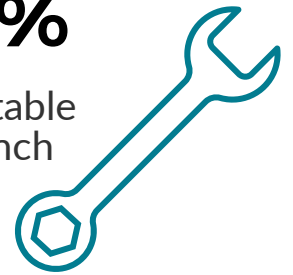
40%

Screwdriver Set



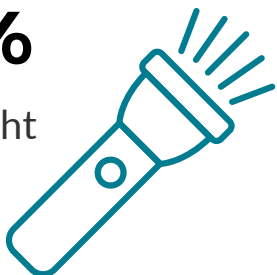
40%

Adjustable Wrench



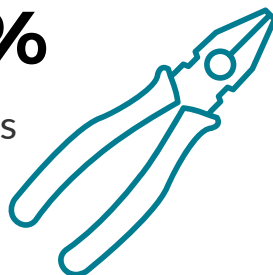
39%

Flashlight



37%

Pliers



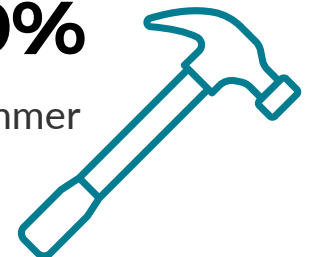
32%

Humidity Meter / Detector



29%

Hammer





What Are They Saying?



“Allow me to order the tools I need to do the job myself.”

- Anonymous Maintenance Team Member

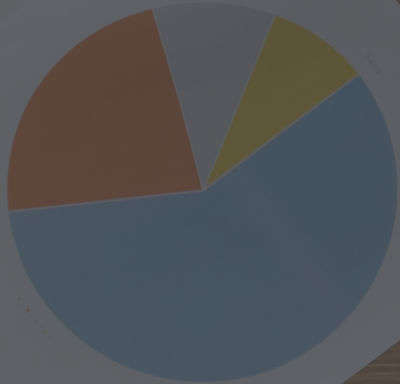


“Provide tools and supplies, or push for these from the client. For example, painting units is much easier and quicker with proper equipment like tray liners or small buckets to use for cutting in.”

- Anonymous Maintenance Team Member



Conclusion



Conclusion

Maintenance turnover remains high, but it's not because employees want to leave. In fact, 78% say they expect to stay with their company over the next year. What drives departures isn't a lack of loyalty, but a lack of support. Chronic short staffing, missing basic tools, limited training on current technology (or any skills training at all), and uncertainty in helping residents with on-site tech all undermine service team members' ability to succeed and feel satisfied in their performance.

The good news? These obstacles are solvable. It starts with leaders recognizing the issues and making solutions a priority. While not everything can be fixed at once, addressing even one challenge can boost job performance, improve morale, and strengthen retention.



About this Study

A Collaborative Study Conducted for Service Team Training by Swift Bunny

The goal of this anonymous nationwide survey was to evaluate on-site maintenance employee feedback regarding the availability of tools to complete their work, the impact work technologies have on their ability to do their job, the training and support they receive, suggestions, and more. In doing so, we were able to identify industry strengths and opportunities to improve.



Methodology

- An anonymous survey available in both English and Spanish
- Direct contact with company senior executives to recruit participation in the survey for on-site maintenance employees
- Social media utilized to recruit company and individual participation
- Companies rolled out the survey to their on-site employees using the email template and schedule provided
- Promotion of a public survey link at conferences across the country

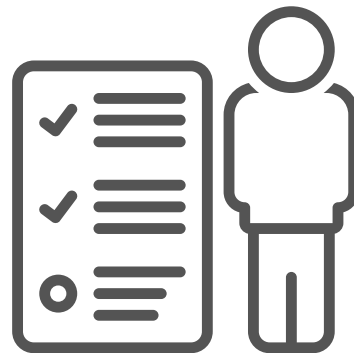


Participation and Respondents



PARTICIPATING
COMPANIES

22

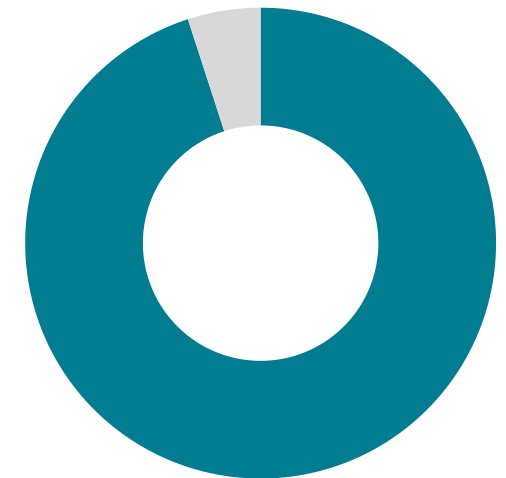


RESPONDENTS

1047

Completed in Spanish

5%



Completed in English

95%



TITLES -- TIGHT WATERFALL

SA -- SUNSHINE COASTLAND -- DAY
1977, in a sunny room lying on a bed bare-chested,
in fastidious ways.

SA -- SUNSHINE COASTLAND -- DAY
Lying face down on a mattress bed, a MASCOT beside his
back.

SA -- SOLING -- DAY
Already reversed, gone to the stairs and leaves the
the glass window of it, we can see a hand sign that
a name "FINLANDIA", he walks the streets of

ST SHOP -- ORLANDO'S OFFICE -- DAY
Sitting on his desk calls her secretary, they talk on
phone.

ORLANDO
Monica... Have you seen a big white
envelope that was sitting back on
my desk?

MONICA
No, Er, I haven't seen it.

ORLANDO
Thank you.

Up the phone.

ING LOT -- ORLANDO'S CAR -- DAY
Takes for the envelope on the car's glove box, he
goes to the trunk of the car, goes through magazines,
the envelope is not there.

L -- HALLWAY -- NIGHT
Crosses the lobby of a middle-range hotel and heads
out desk.



About the Authors

Meet the Author

MARK CUKRO

Mark Cukro is the President of Plus One Consulting, Inc. and founder of Service Team Training. Mark is a national speaker, a thought leader and one of the most trusted resources in the industry in service operations, team development, and training.

His certifications include CAPS, CAMT I, CAMTII, CPO, CPO Instructor with the PHTA, EPA proctor for the NEW 608 certification as well as all HVAC Excellence courses. Mark is also a NAAEI Instructor and worked on the development of the new CAMT program.

Prior to Starting his own company, he was the Director of Service Team Development for Colonial Properties Trust, Inc, a New York Stock Exchange traded company with 148 properties and over 48,000 apartment homes.

On a personal note, Mark is also a professional Jiu Jitsu Coach and owns and operates a Martial Arts Academy in Harrisburg, NC. and owns commercial and residential real estate and recently completed construction on a new building.



Meet the Author

DOUG MILLER

Doug Miller is Partner and Chief Research Officer with Swift Bunny. After developing product plans for the firm's employee and resident survey systems, he oversees research programs including a suite of surveys for associations and their members, as well as custom surveys. Formerly, Doug was Founder and CEO of ManagInc; its employee, resident, and service provider feedback system helped clients enhance their focus on stakeholders to improve employee retention, resident retention, and reputation. Before ManagInc, Doug was Founder and President of SatisFacts Research, the multifamily industry's leading resident feedback program provider. Doug started his career in property management in the 1990's as Director of Marketing for two NMHC Top 50 firms. Doug earned his BSBA from Washington University/St. Louis and MBA/Marketing from The American University. He is the proud father of two sons. He and his Dachshund sidekick live in his hometown of Bethesda, MD.



Meet the Author

JEN PICCOTTI

Jen Piccotti strives to show organizations how to reduce employee and customer turnover. As the President of Swift Bunny, she helps organizational leaders connect the dots between data, team performance, and revenue growth. A noted researcher, speaker, and author, Jen enjoys sharing her unique and actionable insights on the latest trends in employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and operational excellence. She holds a Master of Science in Quality Assurance from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

