

Home Link: Client Feedback Report

For our report, we asked a diverse group of potential users. These included tenants, among whom were students and adults, as well as landlords, both younger and older.

There were three primary questions we asked them, which of course led to other subquestions. These were:

1. What problems do you currently have with managing your tenants/ with your landlord?
2. What tools would be helpful for you (without having seen the ones we're offering).
3. Which of our proposed features do you find important, or non-important (referring to our feature list)

Client 1: A property manager who owns several multi-family properties, and is in his 50's made several points.

In response to the first question:

- ★ Handling tenant work orders and keeping sophisticated, detailed records of it all
 - Issues will come up with tenants claiming you didn't do a particular order or fix something
- ★ Keeping detailed records of everything in general
 - Tenants paying rent, when did they pay, how much did they pay
 - What late fees did they pay, what penalties did they pay
 - You want a complete history of everything that's happening

- This is important for bookkeeping, especially when managing many units

In response to the second question:

- ★ You want tenants to be able to pay rent online in a centralized location so that records can be kept easily
 - He said that services like venmo are not particularly helpful because they do not keep records in the same way that other services do
 - Some tenants are not sophisticated enough to do this, so you also want other ways to handle it through the platform if they aren't paying through it
- ★ You want tenants to easily be able to request any kind of work orders through the site, and of course you want to keep records.
- ★ Additionally, it would be helpful if you could see recommendations and reviews of places to buy certain things for work orders.
 - If you need a pressure washer in the area, maybe we would want to see some kind of angie's list type thing in the management software itself
- ★ You want to be able to generate reports based off of certain data you have collected
 - The most important thing is bookkeeping and accounting for everything that has happened.
- ★ Some services like costar are helpful because they provide a lot of data and analytics about other local properties. These are very expensive though. It

would be helpful potentially to have access to some form of these kinds of data through a property management software.

- ★ It would also be helpful to have the software feed into other websites like apartments.com to help you list and advertise units.
- ★ Essentially you want a one-stop shop for property management.
 - Paying rent
 - Handling communications (specifically work orders)
 - Bookkeeping and Accounting

In response to the third question:

- ★ Charge Rent
 - Critical for keeping records. Definitely important.
- ★ Calendar for viewing and scheduling visits, showings, maintenance, etc.
 - Important.
- ★ Give move-out notice.
 - Very important for record keeping. You want records of everything that's going on of this nature.
- ★ Can provide utilities recommendations.
 - Could be important
- ★ Should be able to view every service needed for each property. Some have to pay utilities themselves, so provide a way to keep track of those payments.
 - Important
- ★ Todo list for payments, collection, inspections, maintenance.
 - Important
- ★ Claim a home -- similar to Zillow, you can input an address and unit, and if it is unclaimed you can claim it as a home you own and rent it out. We can't create a detailed authentication system for this since this requires licenses and other requirements, but we can model how it would work (eg. making the claim, filing a counterclaim if someone else has already claimed it and you believe it was an error).

- Important

Client 2: Focus group including two current landlords and two current tenants

In response to the first question:

- ★ scheduling appointments at a time that works for everyone
- ★ Emergency requests like broken plumbing take a long time when the landlord facilitates all communication with third party contractor
 - such as:the plumber.
- ★ Hard to understand expectations, sometimes don't get a timely (or any) response to questions
 - such as can we get a pet? . Also what are the consequences of failing to meet these expectations?
- ★ Landlords need to send reminders, both seasonal and occasional, to inform tenants of responsibilities
 - Eg. turn of irrigation at the end of summer; hurricane warning for sunday, please secure outdoor items and make sure to designate a safe room.
- ★ Landlords need a way to inform tenants of upcoming inspections 24 hours before and make sure they get this info.
- ★ Landlords need a way to professionally issue warnings and fines
- ★ Tenants should be able to submit property change requests (eg. can i build a fence?) that are easy for the landlord to accept/deny.
- ★ Getting a record of rental history.
- ★ Knowing who (landlord or tenant) handles what utilities and services, if it is the renter, who should they contact for a specific service (like garbage pickup).
- ★ Landlords overwhelmed by many properties, keeping track of all the tasks for each one.

In response to the second question:

- ★ In-app calendar for scheduling
- ★ Emergency request functionality--set up for quick response and to go directly to the person capable of solving the problem, while the landlord can still monitor what is happening
- ★ Page to view contract
- ★ Page to view simplified expectations and their consequences (like smoking and pet policies)
- ★ Scheduled alerts--for recurring (eg seasonal) reminders
- ★ Custom alerts--for one-time events (eg natural disaster)
- ★ Upcoming inspection alerts--must be accepted/resolved by the tenant, so there is proof 24 hr notice has been given
- ★ Reminders for upcoming appointments
- ★ Printable report of rental history
- ★ Portal for property change requests
- ★ Place to give notice (for moving out)
- ★ Virtual home inspections
- ★ Service requests should be able to contain photos
- ★ Place for landlords to recommend vendors (like garbage co.) to renters
- ★ For landlords, requests should be triaged by importance
- ★ A view-only type account for landlords whose properties are managed by a rental co.
- ★ A screen where it is easy for the landlord to see alerts/requests/etc for **all** his properties

In response to the third question:

These are the things client felt were imperative:

- ★ Payments

- ★ A way for landlord/tenant to directly communicate with each other (messaging)
- ★ Alerts
- ★ Requests
- ★ Rental history

Client 3: Property owner who used to manage their properties, but now uses a management company.

In response to the first question:

For this client, this was not a primary source of income while they were still working, but now that they are retired it has become primary.

They find that the requirements for communication are high, and frustrating, given the number of people they have to manage and just how different each person communicates. One tenant might call exclusively, another might text, another might email, so not having a consolidated stream makes it easy for people to slip through the cracks if one isn't careful. This can also be problematic because you can't gauge importance or severity right away, and batching processes is impossible.

Additionally, dealing with vendors can be frustrating since something you should be responsible for, while other things the tenant should be able to handle themselves, so having some automation to help the tenant help themselves (in the appropriate cases) would be useful.

In the same vein as communication differences, payments are also frustratingly different as well -- one person might use cash, another will use an online payment of some sort, others will use mixed -- so a way to unify that would be nice. Of course, people should still be able to pay in cash, but the idea would be that I can keep track of who pays how much and when.

In response to the second question:

Definitely an easy-to-use website that provides the functionality to deal with the problems I listed above. It'd be great to have an all-in-one service which will manage everything.

Also, if there could be some level of automation (late rent reminders, move-out reminders) that would be helpful as well.

If you could somehow auto-sync with Zillow that would probably make your life easier.

A vendor facing section, where vendors can have a profile and a landlord can have a network of trusted vendors (so a tenant complains to landlord, landlord forwards complaint to repairman, repairman sends estimate and time, landlord forwards to tenants). Vendors can bid on problems (competition, better prices).

In response to the third question:

Charging rent of course, receiving requests would be a huge help, viewing details of each property is a must-have, selecting properties and associating them with your account otherwise the rest of the platform can't run. The vendor functionality is appropriate as a later goal since that's probably a much more complicated solution to implement within just your class.

Client 4: International tenant living in an apartment building**In response to the first question:**

This client feels that she needed to fill a lot of documents to prove her payment eligibility. She thinks it would be nice if the process happened online, not by paperwork.

Also, She feels uncomfortable that she needs to contact the management office whenever she is expecting packages. She does not want to communicate using her phone. She said it would be better if i can create a request online to pick up my package instead of calling the office.

Thirdly, She said one time there was a construction going on in the building that caused her not to sleep. She said it would be better if the management office notified her in advance, so she could sleep in her friend's house.

In response to the second question:

The client said it would be great if the landlord provided a way that we can use to pay the rent online. rather than transfer the money or pay in cash or check.

Also, she said there was a huge amount of paperwork I did when I moved to the apartment. This could be fixed if the management company provided electronic forms to fill them.

Lastly, she said If there is a construction going on in the building , the tenant should be notified and asked about the best time to start the construction.

In response to the third question:

Below are the features that the client feels there are important :

1. Paying the rent online
2. Creating maintenance requests
3. Alerts

4. Scheduling
5. Chat communication will be a huge addition to your features.

Conclusions:

This was an enlightening step for us, since it validated what we believed to be a useful product, and also highlighted the various priorities of the features we intend to implement. Our MVP phase is broad enough to accurately represent the final version of the product, yet manageable given the time and resources we have.