



# University of Louisville Research & Results

## Best Vendor/Operator Solution — On Campus



# 2012

### How the vendor solved a unique need for the operator/university and its projects

The University of Louisville (UL) needed data similar to those EdR collected for on-campus collegiate housing it developed and managed for the university. In summer 2011, EdR and UL's Department of Housing and Residence Life began discussing how to integrate assessing both UL and EdR student satisfaction. UL and EdR already had successfully integrated marketing, joint license, transfers, assignment database, delinquent account process, resident assistant training and rent payments (including agreements with financial aid). To complete this seamless relationship, it made sense to combine assessment efforts. By doing so, EdR helped UL get the information it needed quickly and inexpensively. Offering the same survey tools to students and parents, UL and EdR gained the ability to compare outcomes across campus consistently, enhancing the data's usefulness.

**Background:** J Turner surveys, an important aspect of EdR's proprietary reporting, are essential to monitoring the success of marketing and sales efforts. EdR's SOAR — Scoring Opportunities and Recognition — program uses a complex but easy-to-understand survey system to assess:

- Prospective resident's leasing experience
- Move-in experience and satisfaction
- Parent (guarantor) experience and satisfaction
- Overall resident satisfaction levels, including future housing plans
- Management-client satisfaction surveys



EdR obtains the data for the SOAR program using four J Turner satisfaction surveys:

- **Move-In Survey:** Assesses residents' move-in/leasing experience; administered annually in September.
- **Prospect Surveys:** Issued weekly to all community visitors.
- **Spring Renewal Survey:** Assesses residents' overall satisfaction and asks them to indicate whether they plan to renew; disseminated to residents in February.
- **Parent (Guarantor) Survey:** Assesses the parent/guarantor experience, issued each September.

J Turner collects and analyzes the completed surveys. Move-in, guarantor and renewal survey findings are summarized in a report that EdR distributes to regional directors for discussion with community managers. This information provides management with insight into resident and guarantor satisfaction. QuickPulse reports from the prospect surveys are sent directly to community managers to identify leasing trends and areas needing improvement. Managers meet with their leasing professionals and community assistants regularly to discuss the findings.

### How the solution saved the operator money and time

By joining forces, UL eliminated a duplication of effort, thus saving money. This solution also saved a significant amount of UL's time, precluding the need for a request for proposal process that would have been labor-intensive and taken months to complete. UL also did not have to spend the staff hours developing its own tool and running its own analyses.

UL and EdR launched the campus-wide survey program in August 2011. The university's return rate was 31.2% for the move-in survey and 30.7% for the guarantor survey while EdR's return rate was 35% for the move-in survey and 35% for the guarantor survey. The campus-wide return rate for the move-in survey 33.1% and the guarantor survey 33%.

### Return on Investment of the Solution

Based on survey results, these items to improve resident satisfaction — hence lease renewal — were identified and implemented.

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### University Action Items and Outcomes

#### General

- Hire maintenance staff specifically for housing instead of sharing Physical Plant staff
- Clean the community bathrooms twice daily and on weekends
- Develop better system for maintenance requests and follow-up

#### Maintenance

- Inspect all rooms for dirt/mold before move-in
- Replace study room furniture and refresh paint as necessary
- Post extermination dates on housing website/or in buildings
- Replace blinds
- Update bathrooms (re-do drains, fans, partitions and showers)
- Add changing room for showers/cubbies
- Add lounge/kitchen on each floor

#### Cleaning

- Post cleaning specifications
- Conduct hygiene program
- Organize a cleaning staff social to meet residents
- Teach residents how to use a plunger and clean a bathroom

#### Safety/Security

- Housing locksmith onsite for at least the first two weeks of the semester and the two weeks before students move in (four weeks total)
- Better accounting of lost/new keys by summer conference staff
- Ensure security measures are understood and followed consistently and accurately
- Key card access for buildings to eliminate using fobs

#### Other

- Train RA staff to create realistic expectations for students about living in a community and help them balance autonomy (private apartment) and engagement with others
- RAs meet one-on-one with every resident on their floors
- Improve the check-in process to ensure an easy transition into each unit
- New equipment and game tables for lobby and/or basement

### EdR Action Items and Outcomes

#### Diversity and Confrontation Staff Training

- More emphasis on these areas in fall semester
- Dedicate in-service time to follow up
- Hire an “expert” to perform this training

#### Improve Security

- Address Tailgaters
  - Scrutinize who is entering the building
  - Do spot checks of who is entering while on call

#### Improve Amenities

- Continue furniture and carpet upgrades
- Install digital televisions
- Install area rugs in TV rooms
- Sound-proof the common room to enable adding:
  - Music space
  - Arcade video games
  - Pool table
- Better advertise current amenities, such as Wii
- Install water stations in the lobbies
- Establish a foot-washing area near the sand volleyball court
- Provide an ice machine

#### Pre-check-in Room Cleanliness/Maintenance Issues

- Continue to improve the room-checking process before move-in
- Require maintenance staff to leave notes when they work in a resident room

#### Joint Action Items and Outcomes

- Work with housekeeping to ensure units are well-prepared for opening
- Continue capital improvements
  - Furniture reupholstering as an alternative to more costly replacement
  - Carpet replacement
- Ensure maintenance issues are addressed in a timely manner and provide proof via notes
- At orientation, address in more detail:
  - Room-selection process
  - Campus security
  - Checking roommate information
  - Remind parents of newsletter/book provided to parents and students
- Enhance staff visibility
  - Provide staff profile sheets to parents at opening

