







Interview with Ray Scarabosio of Jackson Group Property Management

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Ray Scarabosio, Owner
Jackson Group Property Management

Key Benefits

-  Easy to Use
-  Access It from Anywhere
-  Data Migration Included
-  Training and Support Included
-  Upgraded Security
-  Website Included

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This is an interview with Ray Scarabosio, MPM and Owner of Jackson Group Property Management, a full-service property management company serving clients in San Francisco and the Peninsula. Ray is a former president of the National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM) and was recently interviewed for the book, 50 Interviews: Successful Property Managers, by Mike Levy. The Jackson Group uses AppFolio Property Manager to run their successful and growing business.

Tell me a little background about how you started the company. What interested you at first?

My parents and grandparents were apartment owners so I was introduced to the business at an early age. I realized that at some point we would be responsible for these properties, so why pay someone to manage them?

When I first started I really enjoyed the challenge – it is never boring. I didn’t completely understand all of the ins and outs of property management and I’m proud that I was able to teach myself. You don’t go to school to learn how to be a great property manager!

What do you think are the key elements to running a successful property management business?

I liked the interview process for 50 Interviews: Successful Property Managers because I took some time to think about the keys to running a successful business:

1. Take the time to understand and become experts in your marketplace (cities served).
2. Understand what you’re selling and why it is unique so you can clearly show the value you bring to your customers.
3. Saying “Yes” all the time is not great customer service! It is important to know your limits. If 95% of your properties run a certain way and you take on a new owner/customer that doesn’t fit your business model it may seem good at first but in the long run you’ll end up wasting time.
4. Respond fast to inquiries. Be sure you have a follow-up system because people like to get responses, even if you don’t have an answer. Our philosophy at Jackson Group is that everyone handles every property in our office. We do this so you never get anyone on the phone that says, “I don’t handle that property!” This is one of the reasons we chose [AppFolio Property Manager](#) – it so important that everyone takes good notes and the information is centralized so we are all on the same page.

Why were you looking for a new property management software solution?

We were using Promas and were looking for a solution that was web-based so we could access our information and work from anywhere. We are always looking for ways to become more efficient and make our mundane tasks take

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less time. When we started researching web-based solutions we looked first at Propertyware but ended up with AppFolio because the interface was more professional and easier to use so our staff was trained much faster. We also like that AppFolio is an integrated solution so I know it all works – you don't have to worry about expensive add-ons.

What are some specific benefits you have experienced with AppFolio?

I like the fact that we are partners with AppFolio to come up with solutions that benefit our company and others like us. AppFolio has always been so willing to listen to and work with us – I always feel like I'm part of a team and feel appreciated.

Here are just a few of the benefits we've seen in our office:

- Work order management – I love the fact that we can be green, email the tenant and the owner so they know there's a problem and email my vendor so all parties are working together. Before it was very cumbersome and I had to explain to everyone the same things over and over. Now we can all see the work order together and this saves a lot of steps. We even cut and paste exactly what the tenant says so it is their words in the work order.
- Posting to Craigslist took on average 1 hour to post 10 vacancies – now we do it in 10 minutes. Our website also has our complete vacancy postings and they're always up to date.
- It's so much faster and easier to communicate with our tenants. We try to get everyone on email as new tenants so if we're going to shut off water on a specific day, we can email everyone with a personalized note and this saves a lot of time. It breaks down the barrier of “us against you.”

How has AppFolio impacted your business growth and profitability - will you be adding properties this year? Will you be adding staff?

My theme has always been that we are large enough to handle any kind of property but small enough to offer personalized service. We definitely keep it simple in our business philosophy and the AppFolio Owner Statements and Owner Portal help us to improve our communications with owners.

This past year we've been able to grow our portfolio without hiring additional staff and we also use AppFolio when we sell our services to new owners. We recently signed a new client with 100 units and they told us that AppFolio's reports, Owner Statements and Craigslist integration were among the main reasons they chose us.

When you describe AppFolio to your colleagues, what do you tell them?

Generally I tell them that if you're looking at it just from the cost you're missing the big picture. You have to start with the value to your business so the price is relative to the benefits you will get. If you can avoid adding a new staff member or save time on routine tasks you can really save your business so much money – with Craigslist posting alone we're saving hours each day.