

Improve the effectiveness of your customer communications

Customer experience and digital transition are two major challenges facing housing associations today, along with the longstanding requirement to deliver Value for Money (VfM).

So, with these topics high on the 'agenda', why is it that many housing associations have yet to address the way they communicate with their customers across all channels? Print is still the channel of choice for the majority of housing associations as they strive to develop their digital strategies and deal with the challenges of persuading customers to adopt electronic means of communication. Perhaps surprisingly, not all customers want to use a portal or receive such important communications as Rent and Service Charge statements electronically, so attention needs to be given to creating a meaningful postal message so that recipients can understand the financial numbers, with text content explaining variances between estimates and actual. This needs to be presented as a 'story' which takes each recipient on the 'journey' through the information provided.

Two reviews are currently underway way - 'Social housing green paper: a 'new deal' for social housing'¹ and the 'Leasehold Reform'². The latter report was published on 11th March 2019 with a number of conclusions and recommendations.

Without wishing to list the details of either review, there are underlying issues that need to be



addressed, including transparency and greater customer (tenant) involvement, especially around service charges and major works. I highlight these to draw attention to a solution to help manage 'transparency' through clarity of information being provided to customers.

We see a number of examples where the information that is being communicated to

customers fails with regard to clarity, which creates a lack of trust on the part of customers. This lack of trust also creates indirect costs because customers call with queries on the information sent to them, which can result in low customer satisfaction ratings.

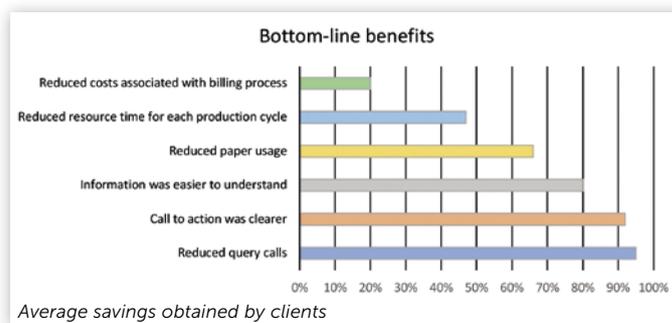
At the end of the day getting the processes and systems aligned to deliver transparent information is one challenge,

but delivering this in a coherent way is a separate one.

At TriPartum, CCM (Customer Communications Management) is our speciality. We have taken a number of housing associations through a process to improve the effectiveness of their customer communications, especially around rent and service charges, delivering the key benefits of improved customer experience and value for money. These changes in process can also help with the digital transition process as the solution can be integrated with portal developments; secure electronic file delivery; automating change processes; electronic completion of forms with signatures, as well as the ability to integrate data from multiple systems.

This all happens as part of a managed service that we provide, which means our clients do not need to invest in software platforms, maintenance, systems infrastructure and resources. Instead, they can focus on their core business and derive the bottom-line benefits from better serving their customers with the comfort that our service and expertise is helping deliver a better customer experience.

James Shand
Managing Director,
TriPartum Limited
tripartum.com



1. Social housing green paper: a 'new deal' for social housing – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2. Leasehold Reform – House of Commons Housing Communities and Local Government Committee