



# THE HIGH COST OF HYPERBOLE: “LUXURY” AND OTHER MULTIFAMILY CURSE WORDS





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## Renter Focus Group Qualifiers

- Ages: 18–65
- Income: minimum \$65k
- Living at a community of  $\geq 100$ + units
- Most recent apartment search within 2 years
- Utilized the community website and online reviews
- Toured the actual apartment in person



# Renter Focus Group Questions

1	2	3	4	5
What comes to mind when an apartment community includes the word "luxury" in its name or community description?	In your opinion, what would it take for an apartment community to truly live up to its "pet friendly" claim?	What would you require in order to agree a community which advertises itself as "convenient" is truly convenient?	What are some things that apartment communities include in their marketing or websites that you consider to be basic expectations?	In your opinion, what are some of the most over-used phrases and/or words that apartment communities use in their marketing?



# Renter Focus Group Questions

6	7	8	9	10
As it relates to your current apartment community, what marketing descriptions do you feel were inaccurate?	In thinking about perception vs. reality, do you feel that your current living experience has met your expectations?	Most advertising strategies are created to attract new renters. In what ways do you feel that marketing teams also impact resident retention?	What's your opinion on this marketing description?	What's more helpful, the content of a review, or the star rating of the review?



A wide-angle photograph of a modern, multi-story apartment complex. The buildings are light grey with dark grey accents and balconies. A large, rectangular swimming pool with blue mosaic tiles is in the foreground, surrounded by lounge chairs and greenery. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

# LUXURY







**87%**  
EXPENSIVE

A higher cost is  
assumed  
immediately



# LUXURY







**87%**  
EXPENSIVE

A higher cost is  
assumed  
immediately



**73%**  
AMENITIES

The expectation is  
for amenities  
beyond the basic  
standard

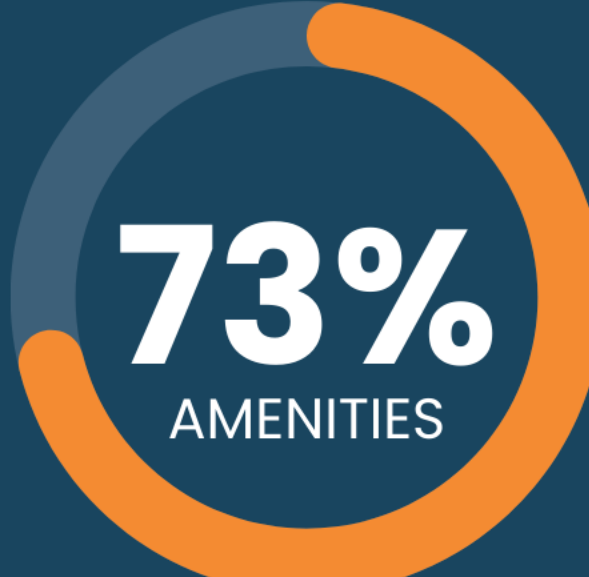


# URY



**87%**  
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A higher cost is  
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**73%**  
AMENITIES

The expectation is  
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beyond the basic  
standard



**73%**  
EXCLUSIVITY

Living at the  
community  
enhances the  
renter's personal  
reputation





A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner ring. The orange ring is filled with 87% of the circle, representing the percentage of renters who assume a higher cost immediately.

**87%**

EXPENSIVE

A higher cost is  
assumed  
immediately

A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner ring. The orange ring is filled with 73% of the circle, representing the percentage of renters who expect amenities beyond the basic standard.

**73%**

AMENITIES

The expectation is  
for amenities  
beyond the basic  
standard

A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner ring. The orange ring is filled with 73% of the circle, representing the percentage of renters who believe living at the community enhances their personal reputation.

**73%**

EXCLUSIVITY

Living at the  
community  
enhances the  
renter's personal  
reputation

A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner ring. The orange ring is filled with 67% of the circle, representing the percentage of renters who do not consider renovated apartments deserving of the luxury label.

**67%**

NEW

Renters do not  
consider  
renovated  
apartments  
deserving of the  
luxury label



# **“Luxury” sets a high bar.**

When you use the word,  
renters expect you to deliver  
— **and if you don’t, they feel  
misled**





“

I get why they wanna advertise that way, but in apartments, luxury doesn't seem to mean anything anymore.

Lori, New York, NY

”



## **“Luxury” qualifiers**

1. New construction
2. Superior physical product
3. Enhanced services and amenities
4. Higher caliber of neighbors
5. Professional-grade appliances





**“Luxury”  
is vague.**

It means different things to  
different people.



## Old:

“Enjoy luxury living with upscale amenities...”

## New:

“Your apartment has **floor-to-ceiling windows**, a quiet corner nook for remote work, and **direct access to the running trail** — plus no breed restrictions for your pup.”



A black cat with yellow eyes and a brown dog with long fur are looking over a light-colored ledge. The cat is on the left, looking towards the right. The dog is on the right, looking towards the left. The background is dark and out of focus.

# PET-FRIENDLY

 OAIM





**73%**  
AMENITIES

Specific, well-maintained amenities and dedicated areas that don't feel like afterthoughts



# T-FRIENDLY

 **AIM**



A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner circle. The orange ring is filled with 73% of the circle, representing the percentage of respondents who answered 'yes' to the question about amenities.

**73%**

AMENITIES

Specific, well-maintained amenities and dedicated areas that don't feel like afterthoughts

A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner circle. The orange ring is filled with 53% of the circle, representing the percentage of respondents who answered 'yes' to the question about fairness.

**53%**

FAIRNESS

Excessive fees, monthly pet rents and breed/size restrictions are seen as unfriendly

A close-up profile of a dog's head, likely a Shetland Sheepdog or Rough Collie, with long, wavy, reddish-brown fur. The dog is looking down and to the left.

# IENDLY

The logo for OAIM, featuring a stylized orange 'O' followed by the letters 'AIM' in white.

**OAIM**

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 73% of the total. The background is dark blue.

**73%**

AMENITIES

Specific, well-maintained amenities and dedicated areas that don't feel like afterthoughts

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 53% of the total. The background is dark blue.

**53%**

FAIRNESS

Excessive fees, monthly pet rents and breed/size restrictions are seen as unfriendly

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 53% of the total. The background is dark blue.

**53%**

CLEANLINESS

Equal consideration should be given to non-pet renters

ONLY





A donut chart with an orange segment representing 73% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**73%**

AMENITIES

Specific, well-maintained amenities and dedicated areas that don't feel like afterthoughts

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**53%**

FAIRNESS

Excessive fees, monthly pet rents and breed/size restrictions are seen as unfriendly

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 53% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**53%**

CLEANLINESS

Equal consideration should be given to non-pet renters

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 47% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**47%**

CULTURE

Unresolved noise and pet waste complaints



## “Pet-Friendly”

Means a holistic commitment  
to pets and their owners,  
**not just permission to have  
an animal**





“

I think right now, they're just pet tolerant. Pet friendly would be something different.

Daniel, Boca Raton, FL

”



## **“Pet-Friendly” qualifiers**

1. More than a park and poop bags
2. Low to no monthly pet rent
3. Reasonable restrictions
4. Active management of policies
5. Segmented communications



## Old:

"Our community is pet-friendly with amenities for you and your furry friend."

## New:

"**No breed restrictions**, no weight limits — just a place where **your dog is truly welcome**. Let them run free in the on-site **dog park**, rinse off in the **pet spa**, and meet new friends at our **monthly yappy hour**."




A person is driving a car, with their hands on the steering wheel. They are holding a smartphone in their left hand, which displays a map application. The map shows a street grid with several location pins in blue, orange, and red, and a blue line indicating a route. The word "CONVENIENT" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# CONVENIENT







**67%**  
PROXIMITY

If location is the  
primary  
convenience, be  
specific and focus  
on proximity



# ONVENIENT



A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner ring. The orange ring represents 67% of the circle.

**67%**

PROXIMITY

If location is the primary convenience, be specific and focus on proximity

A donut chart with an orange outer ring and a grey inner ring. The orange ring represents 60% of the circle.

**60%**

SERVICES

Features that reduce the need to leave the community

A blurred background image of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard.

# ENIENT







67%

PROXIMITY

If location is the primary convenience, be specific and focus on proximity



60%

SERVICES

Features that reduce the need to leave the community



53%

OPERATIONS

Convenience is linked to how easy it is for renters to manage their tenancy and interact with staff

NT

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 67% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**67%**

PROXIMITY

If location is the primary convenience, be specific and focus on proximity

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 60% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**60%**

SERVICES

Features that reduce the need to leave the community

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 53% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**53%**

OPERATIONS

Convenience is linked to how easy it is for renters to manage their tenancy and interact with staff

A donut chart with an orange segment representing 47% of the total. The background is a dark blue circle.

**47%**

LOGISTICS

Building design and layout minimizes hassles





“

I think you could look at it in a lot of different ways, to be honest, because convenient all by itself doesn't tell you much.

Alejandra, Charlotte, NC

”



## **“Convenient”**

For a community to truly live up to this claim, renters **require evidence across multiple dimensions**





## **“Convenient” qualifiers**

1. Specified distances between points
2. Fully-enabled mobile apps
3. Short distances within the community
4. Reduces the need to leave home
5. Keyless access to home/amenities



## Old:

"Conveniently located close to shopping, dining, and entertainment."

## New:

"Two blocks from your favorite **taco spot**. Five minutes to **Target**. A quick **bike ride** to downtown. Whether you commute or work from home, you'll spend less time driving and **more time living**."





# BUZZWORDS

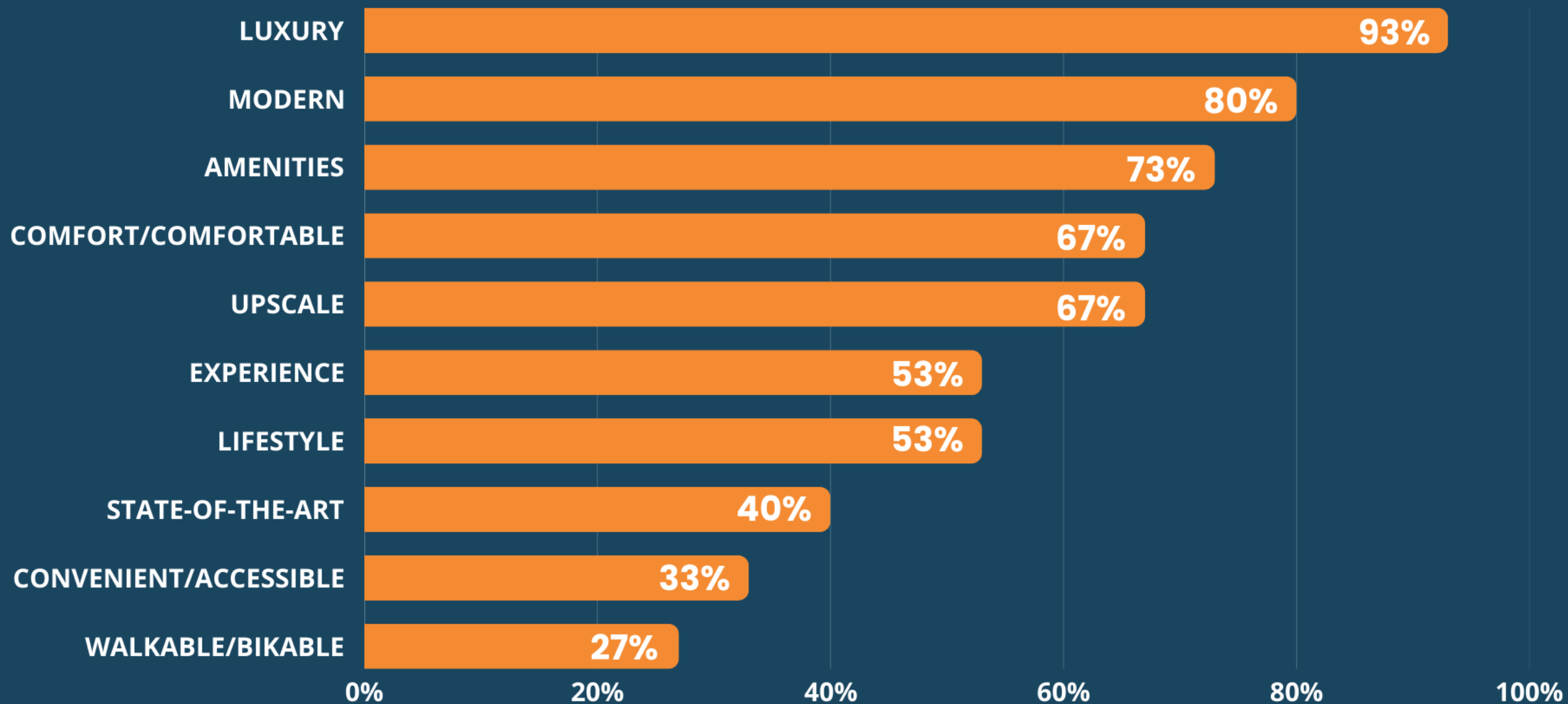


**“Luxury”**

**is officially meaningless.**

93% of respondents specifically  
called out “luxury” as the most  
overused and empty marketing term.






## Old:

"Stay fit with our state-of-the-art fitness center available 24/7."

## New:

"Get your workout in anytime with 24-hour access to our **light-filled fitness studio** — stocked with Peloton bikes, free weights, and **everything you need to crush your goals** without leaving home."



An aerial photograph of a dense evergreen forest. The majority of the trees are a deep, cool blue color. A single tree, located slightly to the right of the center, stands out with a vibrant orange-yellow hue. Overlaid on the image is the text "BREAK THE MOLD" in a large, white, sans-serif font, split across two lines. The text is centered horizontally and partially overlaps the highlighted tree.

BREAK THE  
MOLD



“  
The struggle is real; what other great words are there when everybody has the same stuff?

**Maybe it's less about what the place looks like, and more about *who the place is for*.**

Maybe just listing amenities isn't even the right approach anymore. Giving the place a personality, a vibe – is the way to actually stand out. It's an interesting puzzle to think about.

Julian C, Minneapolis, MN

”



**Who are we for?**

What do we *really* offer?

Go from buzzwords to believable



## Find Your True USPs

What are customers telling you they love about you?

[30lin.es/trueusps](https://30lin.es/trueusps)