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# **Property Management Software - Information & Advice**

Excel spreadsheets and the old standby of pencil and paper may be the organizational weapons of choice for some property managers, but too often their methods begin and end there. There are plenty of cheap, user friendly specialty tools that property managers may choose from that are much better than using Excel. When considering these alternative tools, avoid those that require long-term contracts or that have recurring fees attached. It is important to be able to cancel if needs be without paying a price. Go with programs that include customer support and tutorials as part of the subscription because some property management programs may require a little assistance in order to sift through all of the available features. Support and training should be available that fits in with your schedule. Make sure that your software vendor has extended support hours, especially if your office is in a different time zone to theirs. Ideally, you want property management software that has been developed by actual property managers. The greater their experience, the better. You want the software to be able to efficiently deal with all kinds of properties, from single-family houses to large commercial properties. The program you purchase should also contain the following features:

- Efficient data management. Data and record entry is rather time consuming, and locating the proper feature in your management software can be as well. A program that does not handle these jobs efficiently is probably not for you. If you are in doubt, it is always a good idea to give the trial version a spin.
- A full accounting package. Whether you prefer the simplicity of cash or the detail provided by an accrual method, the management program you purchase should support it. And, because a property manager is continually reading reports and calculating late fees and discounts, pick a program that does it automatically. The reports should be available at any time and for any period.
- Check writing. When you have to deal with a lot of checks, it is great to be able to just print them off with a click of a button. Not having this feature in the property management software that you choose will cost you a lot of time in the long run. Your software vendor should be able to put you in contact with a company that makes the kind of check forms you will need to print on to.
- Reminders. You should be able to set up reminders for appointments and projects. You should also get automatic reminders for the two things every property manager needs to be aware of - expiring leases and late rent payments. The reminders should ideally be in the form of desktop pop-ups or emails.

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