

James Madison University

Squire Hill Apartments Communication Audit

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Organizational Briefing

Squire Hill Apartments is one of the many off-campus student housing options at James Madison University. Located at the bottom of Devon Lane off of Port Republic Road, it is no more than a five-minute drive to campus, or a quick bus ride if you wait at the bus stop right across the street. This makes the location very convenient for students of JMU and is a highlight of Squire Hill Apartments. In this briefing, more information will be offered about the history of the complex, the number of units, rent details, and management styles that will demonstrate how Squire Hill Apartments is different, and at times possibly similar, to other housing options in Harrisonburg.

Unlike Aspen Heights or The Retreat, Squire Hill Apartments has been around long enough to have seen quite a few generations of students. While information about what year the apartments were built is unavailable, the JMU newspaper, the Breeze, gives insight into the history of JMU's off-campus housing, and Squire Hill appears to have been one of the first off-campus apartments available to students in the late 70's. While the complex was built some 40+ years ago, the Squire Hill buildings we see today have since been updated in the year 2000. Another update that has been implemented in the Squire Hill community is the clubhouse/leasing center, which was built in 2012, giving residents access to on-site staff and a variety of 24-hour amenities and a community pool. More recently, in 2018, Amazon Hub, a package delivery locker, was installed outside of the clubhouse, allowing for easy delivery and pickup of any packages residents may order. Present day, the complex is getting ready to implement new parking regulations, which assign each resident a specific parking spot in hopes to cut down on a

shortage of resident parking. All in all, Squire Hill Apartments has developed over the years to accommodate its residents and meet the needs of the present-day student, and there is no doubt that it will continue to see more changes in the future.

As far as individual units, Squire Hill Apartments offers a wide variety of housing units to their residents. There are six different unit options that they provide. All units have catchy names such as “Duke”, “Madison”, or “Blue Ridge” pertaining to James Madison University’s lingo and the community of Harrisonburg. With a variety of units offered, there are different available numbers of bedrooms and bathrooms. Once you get to a higher number of bedrooms the complex spreads to two floors. Squire Hill Apartments clearly identifies that each unit has the option of available furnishing to fill these floors. If the resident chooses a furnished unit they are granted an array of items. The living room furnishing gives the residents a couch, two end tables, a coffee table, an accent chair, and a TV stand. The bedroom furnishing gives tenants a full bed frame, full mattress, a dresser with four drawers, a desk, desk chair and a nightstand. In addition, dining room furnishing gives residents a dining table and four dining chairs. Each type of unit is slightly different from each other. Thus, each apartment, no matter the type of unit, is personalized and customized to the resident’s style or needs. Although the style of each student resident brings to the apartment is not monitored by their parents, their payment might be.

Each floor plan ranges in price depending on the time the contract is signed, and the amenities purchased. Once you get to a higher number of bedrooms and the complex spreads to two or three floors, the price increases. Other fees like pet fees are \$300 non-refundable for the first pet, \$200 non-refundable for each additional pet, and \$25 monthly per pet. Utility, electricity, and water are billed separately, and each resident must maintain them on their own. If one wants a furnished apartment, it is \$10 a month and renter’s insurance can start at \$12 per

month. They have an easy online transaction system for a resident to pay all fees and rent. They provide a variety of services with each apartment. They have a maintenance request form online in case of any issues with appliances or anything involving the apartment. Each resident can submit an online form for something to be fixed and members of maintenance will come and help solve the problem as soon as possible. They also provide parking, fitness center, business center, garage, storage units, and swimming pools. They hold a wide variety of events at all of these locations and try to give every resident the most out of their stay with Squire Hill Apartments.

Management, both onsite and off, in Squire Hill, holds itself to a standard based on values outlined on their website with a tenant-first focus. The complex is owned and operated offsite by Weinstein properties. Ownership is still in the hands of the Weinstein family, giving them a “personal touch when interacting with (their) customers.” According to their website, they value superior service, in the form of “anticipating (their) customers’ needs and continuously pursuing opportunities to improve the resident experience.” This manifests itself in the form of an expectation for their employees to mobilize when any aid is needed from a resident, such as fulfilling maintenance requests. Squire Hill, specifically, has its own maintenance team that is on call at any point during the day, and sometimes outside of business hours, that can be sent by management anytime a problem arises for one of their tenants. In terms of day-to-day management within the property, Squire Hill’s on-site management team is available from 10 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday, and can be reached through three different avenues: phone calls, emails, and in-person visits to their office, for whatever a tenant may need. Also, Squire Hill sends out regular emails to tenants with reminders that utilities are due, special events are occurring, move-in and move-out information, and break procedures, or

any other information that they deem pertinent to residents. Squire Hill's management has also set up a "New Resident FAQ" on their website that details any information a resident may need that is not immediately obvious.

Overall, Squire Hill Apartments offers a living experience that caters to the Harrisonburg community very well, especially for James Madison University students. In consideration to the apartment complexes, they offer a wide variety of housing units that are able to fit different residents' needs. In addition, there is an onsite maintenance crew that is capable of handling an array of resident-based housing needs. The community of Squire Hill Apartments has been around for quite some time and has shown that, with constant improvements and adapting to the changing environment, they will continue to flourish as an off-campus student housing option and for others in the Harrisonburg area.

Purpose and Goals of Audit

Generally, there is plenty of information available about Squire Hill Apartments. But, we have been tasked to go more in depth and uncover the communication tactics used within the company that helps this Harrisonburg apartment complex maintain a positive representation. We dove into collecting data by utilizing personal experience in bettering our understanding of the culture surrounding Squire Hill Apartments. In addition, we conducted a survey for a broader understanding of residents' perspective of Squire Hill's communication tactics. In order to have a basis of communication we analyzed many of their emails sent to all residents to evaluate a more group-based tactic of communicating with residents. Finally we conducted interviews with employees and staff to get a better understanding of staff's point of view. Through utilizing a

wide range of data we are able to grasp an array of information outlets and perspectives to give our group a rich understanding of Squire Hills communication tactics.

Data Collection and Data

Culture Scan:

What “symbols” shape the culture?	
Complex Entrance	Complex entrance(s): Three separate entrances (one after the other at the bottom of the Devon Lane hill) that lead to the various “strips” of units. Only one entrance is labeled with a <i>Squire Hill Apartments</i> sign, and that’s the only entrance that leads to the clubhouse. The sign is lit up at night, and is noticeable from the street. The other two entrances are not labeled with any signs indicating it is a part of Squire Hill. Clubhouse entrance: Updated and modern compared to other buildings in the surrounding area (Devon Lane specifically), red outside paneling makes it stand out from resident units making it easily recognizable as the clubhouse and not another apartment, pathways to clubhouse have signs pointing in directions to certain locations around the complex such as the pool and the leasing office.
Office Area	The office area is located in the clubhouse to the left as you walk in the front door. It is separated by a small wall from the sitting area, so it is easy to identify. The office area is neat and organized and they provide cookies and beverages during move in, and occasionally on a normal day. The main office area has two desks on each side of the room, usually occupied by at least one employee. Then off to the right is another office with one desk separated by a door (but the door is usually open). It is easy to find (right around the corner from the entrance) and is a professional area for applicants and residents to discuss anything they need to talk about. There are tables to meet with Squire employees and couches for those waiting. The office area and its employees are available every weekday from 10 am to 6pm but closed on the weekends.

Location and Performances of Employees	The clubhouse is in a central location that is easily accessible by all residents. Employees that work inside the clubhouse are available to help for any immediate matters on the phone as well as in person, as they are onsite. Maintenance usually replies relatively quick, but performance is overall average. As seen in some personal encounters, maintenance does not give specific times upon their arrival and usually come in unannounced, which can interfere with one's personal schedule.
Observed demographic characteristics of employees	There are many young employees, about 5, working in the clubhouse/leasing office in the age range of 20-40, mostly white women. They are prompt in greeting anyone who walks through the doors and are generally helpful with resident questions, concerns, and/or needs. The maintenance workers are mostly middle aged to older men, some white, Hispanic, or black who are friendly, respectful of residents' space and generally helpful when fixing a problem inside a unit. From personal encounters, every time maintenance is requested, they knock on the door first, and if nobody answers they come in and shout "maintenance!" to let the residents know they are there.
Signage	There is only one sign reading "Squire Hill Apartments" and indicates what complex it is, and it is located at the third entrance. No clear boundaries between the surrounding complexes besides the slight differences in complex appearances and the one sign. Signs in front of the clubhouse indicate parking spots for designated employees and service vehicles. Along the walkway leading up to the front door there is also a sign that lists the hours of operation of the office. The pool area has a "Pool Rules" sign hung up on the fence. Each strip of units is labeled with its unit number and each unit's door is accompanied with a letter, generally A-J. The numbers are large enough to see from the street, however the letters are very small and are hard to spot driving by. There are many parking signs at each entrance that show parking regulations and rules for residents and non-residents. Parking spots have recently been updated with numbers that ensure that each resident has their own designated place to park, but in the process, Squire has also gotten rid of a large majority of visitor spots, making it hard for non-residents to park without the worry of getting towed.

Space Layout of Complex (Individual units, complex overall, other amenities, etc.)	Direction to certain units can be confusing and it can be hard to see the letters of each unit. Order of units seems to be disorganized due to the unevenness of the grounds (some units are on a hill, while some are on ground level to the street). Layouts of the individual units vary, but from experience in visiting multiple layouts, they all have a main living area with a couch, and then a kitchen through a small hallway. Some layouts have an upstairs and downstairs, some only have an upstairs, and some are only one floor. Despite the varying layouts, many Squire Hill Apartments feel cramped and leave little room for extra furniture or decorations. The amenities inside the house are fair, the washer and dryer seem to be older versions and not very up to date, the furnishing for the apartment is reliable, but can have cuts or marks on them from previous owners. The overall amount of space in the living room and kitchen is not congested but not spacious. The layout of rooms vary in size, but in units with four bedrooms (three floors), the rooms on the bottom floor are considerably smaller than those on the top floor.
Aesthetics	Clubhouse: The aesthetic of the rooms inside vary depending on the area. Study rooms are simplistic due to the room's main focus being studying and they are located on the left side of the clubhouse next to the gym. The common area is furnished with couches and chairs and of couple tables that are convenient when the office is busy on move-in day so that residents can sign papers and receive all information that comes along with moving in. The basement lounge area consists of JMU colors and has a handful of activities offered to residents. The gym offers a fair number of machines and equipment for working out and it looks out over the parking lot. The pool outside provides a relaxing area along with a hot tub, lounge chairs, and beautiful scenery for residents to enjoy. The outside of the clubhouse is composed of some beige siding, brick, and deep red siding. Given the appearance of the exterior of the clubhouse, it is evident that it has been recently modernized. Complexes: The complexes surround the clubhouse and each apartment unit vary slightly in outside aesthetic, but all follow a theme of muted and earth tone colors such as light beige and brick, thus creating a sense of simplicity and unity. The same applies to inside the units, where all units come with white walls, brown tile floor in the kitchen, and either carpet or wood floors in the living area.
Sounds/noise Level	On weekdays, the complex is fairly quiet. On weekends, it can get a little noisier, however Squire Hill is not a notorious party or gathering location, so loud music and lots of people can happen, but it is not a common source of noise after 11 pm.

	Since units share walls and some have an upstairs and downstairs, it is not uncommon for residents to hear the people living next to, above, or below them. However, these noise levels vary, depending on the particular people living there. Since the complex allows pets, and has an onsite fenced-in dog park, barking can also contribute to the sounds in the complex. Highway noises are 24/7 as the complex sits on the side of I-81. The level of highway noise, however, depends on how close the resident's units are to the highway. Garbage pick-up can produce loud noises especially for units close to dumpsters.
Use of Technology	They use their website for maintenance requests and rent payments as well as relaying basic information about the complex to prospective residents. They send out frequent emails with updates on events and important information regarding the complex, as well as occasionally introducing new staff members to the team. They encourage group interaction and getting to know the neighbors in the complex. They also include updates and rule changes regarding the complex and will email or call residents personally if any issues arise.
Safety/Security Features	The doors and windows lock and if there is an issue you can call maintenance. The clubhouse has security passes to get into the building and other facilities such as the pool and gym. The fire alarms work well, as they've been prone to go off while residents are simply cooking. There are various cameras throughout the clubhouse.
Observed Interactions	Interactions between the staff and residents tend to happen in the clubhouse. Maintenance interactions will often happen in individual units when they are there to fix a problem. Residents interact at the gym and in the downstairs game room of the clubhouse as well. It is also not uncommon that residents have friends who also live in Squire Hill in other units, so gatherings in units is also a common interaction that occurs. Visitors from other complexes also gather in Squire, as visitor parking spots are often full, especially on the weekends.
Website	The website is easy to navigate with various tabs and labels. Included in these tabs are amenities, floor plans and apply, FAQs, photos, maps, schedule a tour, contact information, and a login button for residents and applicants. Through the resident portal, residents are able to pay rent and request maintenance. The applicant portal allows access to the lease and

	other signed documents as well as the status of your application. The floorplan tab allows prospective residents to see the layout of all types of units. Under the photos tab, many pictures of the units, clubhouse, and amenities are included, which is also a helpful tool for prospective residents.
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Concise Overall Values Statement	Squire Hill values a sense of familiarity and builds upon this by prioritizing community, accessibility, and uniformity within the complex.
Support for your claim that this is the value shaped most strongly. Squire Hill strives for familiarity within their complex by providing students with living spaces that are consistent with one another throughout the complex and the surrounding area of Devon Lane. Even among different layouts, all Squire Hill apartments share similar architectural qualities on the inside, such as the kitchen, staircase, and bathrooms. The outside of Squire Hill units all follow a uniform theme of muted colors with brick accents that blend in with neighboring communities such as Fox Hill Townhomes and the townhomes that line the top of Devon Lane. Inside the clubhouse, there are hints of purple and gold; colors that are reminiscent of the JMU community that all students are familiar with and can connect to. Additionally, the same cycle of employees can be found working in the clubhouse and leasing office, thus opening up the possibility of residents getting to know the staff and vice versa.	
Specific Values (3-4) shaped by symbolic communication and your specific support for how you see these values shaped. - Community - Accessibility - Uniformity	

You should offer a paragraph for each value and the support for your claim that this is an organizational value.

Community is valued within Squire Hill because of the clubhouse features (game room, pool, gym, study room) and the many events that they offer to residents. They encourage engagement in these events through continuous emails and reminders about events. Some emails also include descriptions and pictures of new staff members so that residents are familiar with new faces they may see around the complex. The units are close together, physically making residents feel like a part of a smaller community compared to the largeness of the JMU population.

Squire Hill Apartments displays the value of providing their residents with convenience and accessibility to a range of things. What is held at one of their best values is their central location. Due to the apartment being so close to a college campus, students flock to this location for the accessibility of being close to campus. In addition to traveling to campus, the apartment provides a bus stop right across the street for those who don't drive. Outside of location and travel, Squire Hill values their residents and is always around at the clubhouse to answer any questions or concerns. The club house is central to all complexes and also offers a wide variety of helpful tools. They give residents an available gym, pool, study room, coffee bar, and more tools that will make their stay at Squire Hill comfortable.

Squire Hill displays the value of uniformity through its similar complex facilities. No matter what type of apartment they have, they give an equal number of appliances and provide an equal amount of support for all of their residents. They provide the same services for all residents and maintain all of the apartments in the same way.

Survey Data:

We created a survey to get data and opinions from Squire Hill Residents on the complex's communication. We collected resident data by sending out a survey to neighboring residents, friends, and posting in the online JMU Facebook groups. We sent out this survey to get opinions on Squire's communication and to hear about residents' personal experiences. There were many differing opinions, but overall Squire Hill got good feedback from its residents. We took the most popular answers to get a good generalization of what Squire's communication system is like and how people view it. Most residents have lived in Squire Hill for one year. When it comes to marketing/advertising their complex, many students do not hear about it from

the Squire Hill team, but their friends. The results in this topic show that their marketing efforts seem to need improvement. Many residents have not seen any of their advertising and are only hearing about Squire from their friends. The majority of the residents would recommend Squire Hill to other people while a small amount wouldn't. When asked how often they communicate and read emails from the complex, a majority of them said they sometimes did while others rarely did and a few always did. Emails tend to have a balance from residents when it comes to their preference of communication. A majority of the residents strongly agree that the maintenance staff does a satisfactory job communicating with residents and fulfilling duties. It seems like there were a few that had issues but that is expected in an organization-resident relationship and it is something that Squire needs to improve on. A majority of the residents said that all of the information about facilities (pool, study room, gym, etc.) has been communicated to them effectively. Residents had a neutral opinion when it came to their opinions on whether The Squire Hill Staff cares about hearing their opinions and comments about the complex. Many residents strongly agree that when communicating with maintenance, they have had clear communication on when they are fixing appliances and how they will be in communication with them in the future once the maintenance is finished. A majority of the residents said that they can easily get in touch with Squire Hill employees. The majority of the residents had a neutral opinion when it stated that they have had communication issues with the Squire Hill staff. A majority of the residents said that the employees were responsive in the leasing office and clubhouse. A majority of the residents said that face to face interactions with staff were the best forms of communication for them to get information and get questions answered. Common themes for answers to whether they would live in Squire again were great location, no problems with it, and it's easy to remain in the same apartment but when it came to the negative responses

a lot of it had to do with communication. Many residents would live in Squire Hill again while a small group would not. Most of the survey answers were around 80-85% of the residents answering positively while a small 15-20% rated Squire Hill and its communication negatively. Specific answers that we found interesting to this question and that involved communication were:

“ They fix things quickly, but they don’t let me know when they’re coming which can be annoying, they can be hard to reach via phone but in person are always very helpful and nice. I’ve heard worse about other places, so I’d rather stay at Squire.”

“The service from the leasing office was inconsistent and whenever I brought up major issues with my apartment they were not taken seriously. I had to reach out multiple times and show up in person to get any type of response or feedback”

“ Terrible phone support and maintenance doesn’t tell you when they’re coming they just show up”

“ I never really needed maintenance much aside from an emergency maintenance request which was fulfilled quickly by emergency so **the lack of communication with the minor things didn’t bother me all too much.** The houses are in decent condition and cheap and I do think all the amenities are good. Plus I’ve just kind of accepted if I have something pressing or important to just go in directly”

“ I never had any major issues at Squire and the staff has been super helpful towards me and my roommates. We love it here!”

Although the majority of the answers were positive and most residents are living in Squire in the future, the above responses specifically mention communication and/or communication issues. Maintenance specifically isn't very efficient in letting residents know when they are coming to fix appliances or issues in the apartment which is mentioned in the first, third, and fourth quotes. The maintenance request system is one common issue among residents and their communication with Squire. Many of the quotes had commonalities with in-person feedback being the best way for people to get responses. Phone support seems to be an issue and

lack of communication with maintenance requests is continuously mentioned. There were also responses saying that Squire is always extremely helpful with them and their apartments so there seemed to be a balance of negative and positive comments. Their in-person communication seems to work best, and they need to have a better communication system when it comes to maintenance.

Email Collection Data:

By collecting data on emails sent out by Squire Hill, we are able to understand what information the complex prioritizes and finds necessary to communicate with residents. We collected email data by going through every mass email that was sent to residents during the 2019-2020 leasing year and then categorizing them by content.

Email Category	Number of Emails
2019 Newsletter	1
Welcome Home Information	2
Complex-wide Maintenance (pest control, power washing)	2
Miscellaneous (lost cat, snow day, new Starbucks machine in clubhouse)	3
Internet/cable connection issues	3
Surveys	4
Get to Know the Staff	4
Coronavirus Updates/Information	8

Leasing Office Hours/Closing Information	9
Clubhouse Events (pool party, yoga, gameday brunch)	10
Event/Community Reminders	12
Total	58

Given the data, it appears that the complex mainly prioritizes the communication of their clubhouse events as well as reminders of those events through emails sent to residents. Almost every reminder email pertains to information about an event that was previously emailed; they don't want you to forget. This gives insight into their value of community and gathering within the complex.

The second most frequent type of email sent out was information about the leasing office hours. This shows that Squire Hill is transparent with residents about the hours they are available, if they should change, and wants to make sure that residents are aware of when staff can be reached, thus minimizing any confusion between staff and residents.

The third most common email category is about the COVID-19. In a time of a lot of uncertainty, especially for students (who make up a majority of Squire Hill residents), it is apparent that Squire Hill recognizes students' concerns and are diligent at communicating what they will be changing to their complex to keep their residents safe. One large change mentioned in various emails was closing their leasing office to reduce in-person contact and limiting communication to phone calls and emails during regular hours. Informing residents about important changes like this demonstrates their ability to quickly react and keep everyone in the know in times of unforeseeable crisis. Some of these emails also reiterate CDC guidelines and

ways to stay healthy, thus exhibiting concern for their residents' health and safety, even if they may have since moved back home.

Another category of emails worth mentioning is surveys. While not in high abundance, these surveys offer Squire Hill with resident input and feedback about move in, maintenance efficiency, internet connection, and new renovations to the clubhouse. Each time a resident gets maintenance done in their apartment; a survey is sent to them asking how it went. Each survey (excluding those about individual maintenance) also includes a monetary incentive (chance to win \$50-\$100 Visa Gift Card, \$50 off rent) if taken. While not a top priority, Squire Hill still sees some value in resident feedback and encourages engagement, so much so as to offer “prizes” to those who participate.

There is a wide variety of information that is relayed to residents through Squire Hill’s emails. Ranging from fun events, getting to know the staff, and resident surveys, to more imperative messages that directly affect residents such as issues with the internet connection, a lost cat, complex-wide maintenance, and COVID-19 updates. Through analyzing these emails, it is clear that Squire Hill has used this communicative resource to their advantage, and is transparent with residents about important issues while also encouraging participation in fun community events.

Interview Data Collection:

We had the privilege of talking with two employees of Squire Hill Apartments. In a nonprofessional interview, we prepared a few questions for them in consideration to how they keep their facility afloat successfully. By conducting interviews it gives our data a rich perspective from management in comparison to a residents point of view. We were able to talk

with Miriana, one of the leasing consultants, who gave us very rich intel on how Squire Hill maintains effective communication and combats challenges. In the second interview we were able to talk with the property manager, Joe. Miriana was very positive with her responses. When we asked her how Squire Hill Apartments is different from other complexes in the Harrisonburg area she expressed that it is the proactive management team, care for residents, reliable maintenance team, and people always being in the office that sets them apart. The next question we had was for them to consider their main path of communication with residents, employees, and potential residents. Miriana stated that their main path of communication with residents was calling and if they don't pick up an email is their next best path. In addition she stated that she sees their community emails as effective because they are also sent to guarantors, which are usually parents of students that live there. For a more youth centered path of communication she stated that they are trying to use Instagram more effectively for another connection to their residents. Joe's response took a more general approach, he said that they always like to follow up with residents how they first reached out to them. So, if residents called they took the action of calling them back because they perceived them to prefer that path of communication. On the other hand when it comes to employees' best path of communication they use a system called CRM. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is a system where you are able to keep notes for prospects (floor plan, apps, leases), be in contact with fellow employees, and share a calendar. In consideration for the best path of communication for potential residents Mariana stated that the website answers and suits their needs best. Joe responded saying that email is the best path of communication for potential residents. Another question asked was who is in control of their more public outlets of information: the website and social media. Miriana and Joe both specified that corporate handles the website while their social media is in the hands

of the property managers and is more open to employees to express their ideas. Since Squire Hill Apartments has been around for such a long time, we asked how they have successfully adapted to the changing environment of Harrisonburg. Miriana responded by saying that keeping with the roots of essential customer service, maintaining fair pricing and of course the evident great location helps when challenges are thrown their way. Joe responded similarly by stating that their staff is open to change and always keeps residents in consideration to necessary change. Overall, when we asked if they would change or improve the communication system at Squire both said “no.” Miriana said that she loves the CRM system and said that it keeps everyone on the same page. Joe was very confident by saying that if their communication systems are used effectively it is flawless.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• They want resident feedback. Squire uses surveys to gain resident perspective and improve the quality of their services. They also use monetary incentives (gift cards, lower rent) for residents who take them. • Resident retention. A large majority (84.4%) of residents responded “yes” in the survey when asked if they are living in Squire Hill again next year. When asked why they were staying, many students mentioned that they liked the location, the amenities, the price, and the helpful and friendly staff. • The website is easy to navigate: Their website is very visually appealing, and it is very easy to navigate. Different tabs are clearly accessible and lead anyone who visits the website to additional information. FAQs are also included on the website, answering common questions applicants and residents may have, thus bypassing unnecessary phone calls or emails. • They utilize different forms of communication. Squire Hill has various methods for getting in contact with them and get information: their website, social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook), phone number, and email. Giving residents multiple modes of contact allows for communication that fits the different needs and preferences of residents.	• Maintenance does not communicate their arrival time effectively. From the interview with management, it appears they believe that their maintenance team communicates effectively with residents in regard to when maintenance help will be given. However, from a resident’s perspective the survey proved that the maintenance team does not communicate their arrival time effectively. • There is a disconnect between resident and staff interactions Many residents have experienced trying to contact Squire Hill through telephone and email and had no responses. They had to go into the leasing office in person to get any sort of feedback. However, in the interview with management they considered their telephone and email communication paths to be best for residents. Even stating that they are always there to answer in a speedy fashion. • Their recruitment efforts go unnoticed. As found in the survey results, a majority of residents heard about Squire Hill through friends. They have not shown a prominent presence in the community when the time to sign leases come around in October.
Opportunities	Challenges
• Using more incentives when recruiting residents and marketing their complex. Many other complexes offer incentives for signing lease or staying in a complex, such as winning a new TV or getting the first	• Their target demographic is young and busy. Squire Hill serves a community largely, if not entirely, made up of college students. Many students have workloads and schedules that do not support other activities

month of rent for free. Whether it is creating raffles or giving away t-shirts at the Housing Fair, Squire Hill could start making the recruitment process for leases more appealing and friendly to their student-based clients. ● Collecting and implementing resident feedback for communication. According to replies from our survey and interview, it appears that there is a disconnect between what the complex believes is the best form of communicating with them and what residents believe to work best. Using feedback from residents can help Squire Hill make communication more seamless between staff and residents. ● Finding new ways to get residents to participate in the Squire Hill community. Strengthening the sense of community in Squire Hill can incentivize residents to sign on for multiple leases if they feel that they have developed roots in their community within Squire Hill.	that are planned by the complex. ● Emails are not always read. Only 18.8% of residents who took our survey responded that they <i>always</i> read emails sent by Squire Hill. A majority of residents reported only sometimes or rarely reading Squire Hill's emails. Grabbing the attention of residents through email is a challenge that Squire Hill faces when trying to distribute information. They may be communicating on their end, but if it is not resorbed by residents, it is not a highly effective mode of communication. ● Competition is heavy. There are many other housing and apartment complexes in the Harrisonburg area with differing prices and amenities. Having to stand out from other complexes can pose as a challenge when trying to get residents to sign a lease.
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We were able to draw some conclusions about Squire Hill Apartments' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for communication with residents based on our analysis of their prior communication. In terms of strengths, we felt that Squire Hill was adept at receiving feedback, however, we found their implementation of that feedback was one of their opportunities, and not something that they've done well up to this point. Squire Hill historically has been challenged in regard to sending emails with information that people want to read, as only 18.8% of respondents to our survey said they "always" read emails from Squire Hill. One of Squire Hill's weaknesses that we found to be particularly poor was limited access for residents to

management. Often respondents reported that reaching out to Squire Hill over the phone or through email went ignored and unanswered.

Recommendations for Squire Hill

Recommendation #1)

Although many individuals value Squire Hill Apartments as a great place to stay in Harrisonburg, there is always room for improvement. After collecting data, it was easy to see that Squire Hill connects with their residents through a wide variety of communication outlets. Upon reflection, we found that a recommendation we could give Squire Hill Apartments, in consideration to communication, would be to improve their response time on what staff believes to be their best form of communication, via telephone. Residents have a few complaints with their response time based on the data collected in the survey. Although staff believes that they are responding adequately, their residents believe otherwise. This miscommunication is something that needs to be addressed so their residents' satisfaction will be met. This miscommunication may have evolved from residents being discouraged by expressing their ideas. Although Squire Hill Apartments does not want to display a high-power distance to their residents, it seems as if that is the way residents are perceiving the situation.

Recommendation #2)

Maintenance needs to be more efficient when responding to requests and they need to communicate when they are coming. A lot of times they do not warn residents, or they don't come as quickly as they should. They need to communicate more to residents of their plan and

when they will get the request done. If it is going to take a while they need to tell the residents how long it will take. This is a good example of the communication concept regarding communication networks. The liaison, the bridge for messages to be communicated between various areas, in this communication network is not properly distributing information between maintenance and the residents. The resident becomes an isolate in this situation, someone not connected with others in the group and misses out on receiving important information necessary to be a productive member of the organization. This leads to unwanted stress and this issue should be addressed in the organization.

Conclusion

Overall this communication audit was very eye-opening for us as residents and helped us learn how to audit an organization and find flaws in a communication system. Squire Hill is an organized and great organization, but they have things they can improve on in their communication system. Working together, especially during a pandemic, was difficult but it gave us more experience with working in groups and allowed us to learn more about organizational communication in a challenging yet interesting way.