Calix

Services for Modern Living:

How To Capitalize on the MDU Opportunity

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Broadband Breakthrough:
How To Unlock the Potential of MDUs

The development of multi-dwelling unit (MDU) properties continues to grow globally, driven by population expansion, changing demographics, employment migration, and evolving lifestyles. In the United States, there are more than 900,000 units under construction, close to the highest level in over 50 years.[i] Multi-unit urban housing starts in Canada increased 13 percent to more than 203,000 units in May 2024,[ii] while in the United Kingdom, there are more than 265,000 multifamily units that are either completed, under construction, or in the planning stages.[iii] In these regions, and many others around the world, MDUs are helping to increase both the availability and affordability of housing.

MDUs come in many different shapes and sizes: apartment complexes, condominiums, mixed-use developments, student housing, low-income housing, and age-restricted developments. Regardless of the property they're living in, residents want—and expect—access to technology that will enhance their lives. For property owners and managers, technology is not only an essential amenity to attract and retain tenants, but it also enables smart building automation that will help lower maintenance and insurance costs.

These trends point to a significant opportunity for broadband service providers (BSPs) and managed service providers (MSPs) to provide a range of managed services to MDUs. This eBook will explore how service providers can leverage a broadband platform to address the varied requirements of residents and MDU operators. It will highlight use cases such as the in-home experience, property-wide connectivity, small businesses services, and smart building technologies including the Internet of Things (IoT) and electric vehicle (EV) facilities.

MDUs—A Catalyst for Broadband Growth

As competition in the broadband market intensifies, BSP leaders are focused on finding new ways to drive growth and generate revenue. A study of BSP C-level executives revealed that 57 percent prefer market expansion as their growth strategy, while 43 percent are looking to expand beyond residential markets.[iv]

The ongoing demand for multifamily properties and planned communities, coupled with their increasing connectivity needs, makes MDUs an ideal growth opportunity for BSPs. You can build on your success in serving residential subscribers by addressing a variety of use cases in MDUs of all sizes. Start by delivering an exceptional in-unit experience centered around reliable, secure managed Wi-Fi and other value-added services. Then, expand your offerings to meet the needs of property staff and management, community-wide connectivity, day guests, events, small businesses, and smart buildings with IoT and EV facilities.

Leveraging a single, comprehensive solution to provide multi-functional MDU services offers a range of benefits. You can secure lucrative, long-term contracts with development owners and managers, boosting revenue and stability for your business. At the same time, you'll increase subscriber satisfaction and loyalty, reduce churn, and enhance your value to communities.

Top 5 Benefits of Expanding Your MDU Offering

- Higher annual revenue
- Greater satisfaction and loyalty
- Secure, long-term contracts
- Better business stability
- Increased value to communities
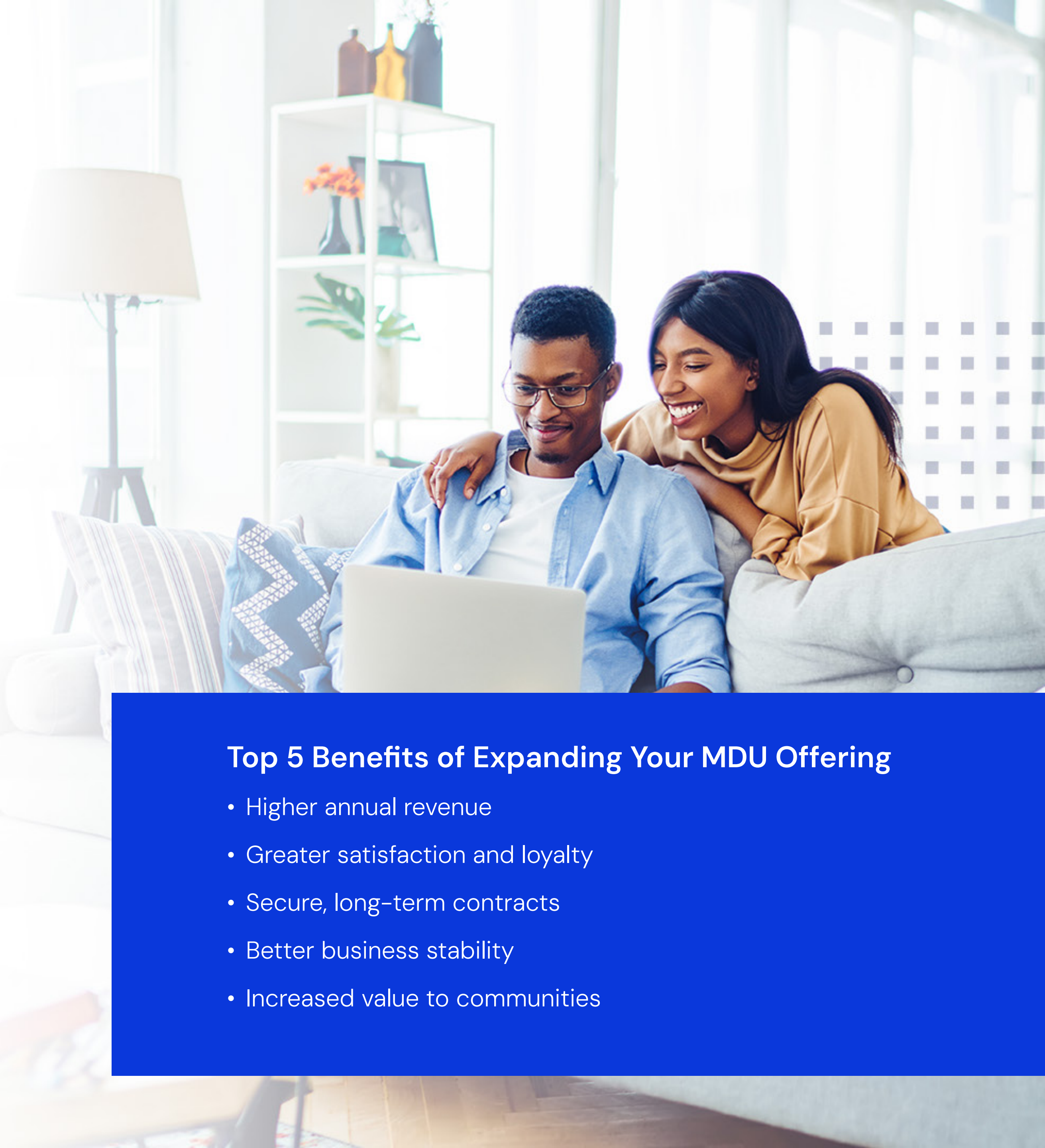
Embrace the Power of the Platform

Not long ago, expanding into new markets and offering new services was complex, time-consuming, and expensive. Thanks to robust, flexible cloud-based broadband platforms, that is no longer the case.

You can address the broad MDU opportunity and its varying use cases with the same platform you use in residential, small business, and community markets. By using the same Wi-Fi systems, cloud services, workflows, and training, your teams will benefit from faster service rollouts, easier management, and greater operational efficiency.

![ICS ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES]
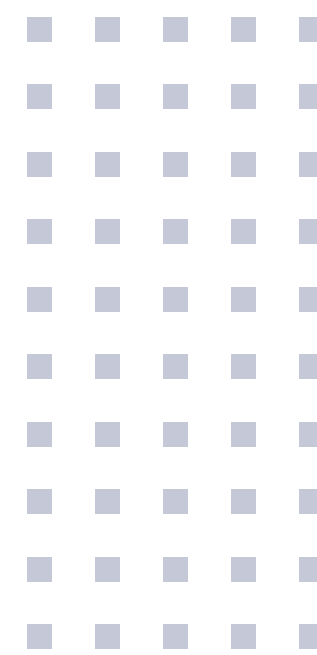
ICS Achieves 10X Faster Time to Revenue and 125+ Percent Increase in MDU Connections

Iowa-based ICS Advanced Technologies (ICS) connected over 125 percent more residential housing units than expected, thanks to their investment in the Calix Broadband Platform. By deploying managed Wi-Fi on an early version of Calix SmartMDU™, ICS connected 8,000 residential units in 12 months—far exceeding their original target of 3,500 units—while meeting their yearly revenue goal in just seven months. They also improved customer support for MDU residents (reducing support calls by 60 percent), simplified operations for property managers, and rapidly expanded their footprint nationwide.

Give Residents the Ultimate Home Experience

In today's connected world, high-speed internet access is a must-have. A 2024 National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC) study of more than 172,000 renters found that 90 percent ranked high-speed internet as the third most important amenity, after air conditioning and an in-unit washer/dryer.[v]

You can easily deliver the same exceptional experience to MDU residents that you've been providing to single-family home subscribers. Using the broadband platform you already have in place, you can scale to satisfy large numbers of subscribers with secure, reliable, personalized, and private multi-gigabit managed Wi-Fi services.

Providing fast speeds is just the starting point—today's consumers want more. Here's how you can go beyond managed Wi-Fi to make their lives easier, safer, and more enjoyable:

- **Personalize their experience** with a self-service mobile app. Residents can manage their network and troubleshoot from their phones. Whether resetting passwords, adding devices, running speed tests, or checking connectivity, the app handles it all. Even better, self-service capabilities reduce support desk calls.

- **Protect their networks** from the growing risk of cyberattacks. Comprehensive—but easy-to-use—network-based cybersecurity blocks malicious websites, viruses, and other intrusions from ever entering their home. Having robust network protection also helps reduce support calls.

- **Give them greater control** of their home network. Advanced controls let residents create and enforce online rules for users and devices and block inappropriate or harmful content.

- **Help keep kids safe** from digital dangers. Social media monitoring allows families to oversee kids' online activities, watching for issues like cyberbullying, online predation, self-harm, suicidal ideation, and more.

With managed services, you have many ways to make residents' in-unit experiences seamless and worry-free. They won't need to install or maintain anything, and they'll always have the latest technology. If something goes wrong, they can count on excellent local support. Start by giving them the most in-demand amenity, and you'll gain happier residents and operators.

Take Connectivity Beyond the Front Door

Outdoor living and amenities are critical in attracting and retaining tenants, and increasingly, this lifestyle includes always-on connectivity. Residents expect exceptional connected experiences, whether in their unit or common areas throughout the property. This is evident in the 2024 NMHC and Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey, where 59 percent of respondents were interested in, or wouldn't rent without, community-wide Wi-Fi, up from 54 percent two years earlier.[vi]

By providing property-wide Wi-Fi, you can keep residents connected no matter where they are. They can stay online at the pool, pickleball courts, clubhouse, community center, or on walking paths throughout the property. Wherever they go, they'll have a private and secure experience.
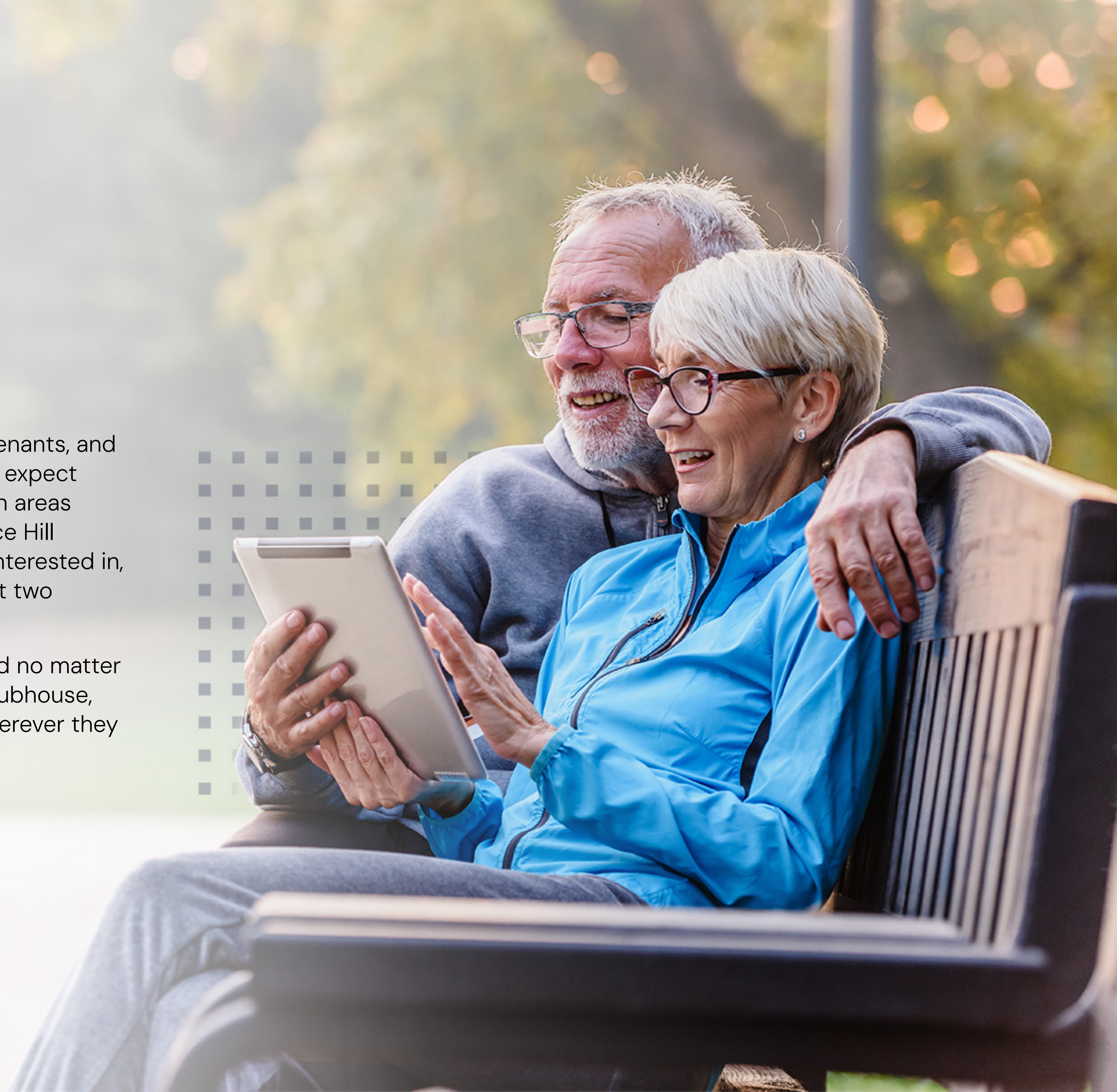
It's not just residents who need connectivity—property staff require high-performance connections to perform their jobs. From the concierge to the security team, health club staff, and maintenance crew, you'll have them covered with secure, always-on Wi-Fi, including Wi-Fi calling. Even guests can get online easily by scanning a QR code or joining a Guest SSID—a captive portal provides short-term access to a separate, secure network in common areas.

Property managers can partner with you to set all network security and content restrictions, ensuring everyone has the appropriate level of access. The solution also prioritizes in-unit over tenant roaming traffic to optimize the resident experience.

By providing seamless, convenient, and secure connectivity that spans the entire MDU, you enhance the experience for residents, staff, and visitors alike. In doing so, you increase tenant satisfaction and boost the property's appeal to prospective residents.

Fostering Vibrant Mixed-Use Developments

The growth of mixed-use developments is reshaping both urban and suburban environments across the U.S. In urban areas, these developments are revitalizing city centers by creating vibrant, walkable communities that blend residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. Suburban environments, traditionally characterized by separated zoning, are also embracing mixed-use models to create more dynamic and sustainable living spaces. Both offer residents the convenience of living close to work, dining, and entertainment, reducing the need for commuting and fostering a stronger sense of community.

Whether in an urban or suburban setting, small businesses in mixed-use developments have unique requirements—and you can address them with managed services. You can offer business owners productivity services traditionally available only to larger enterprises: reliable connectivity, network access control, network-based security, resiliency to ensure uptime, and a customer-facing Wi-Fi portal. This allows business owners to focus on what they do best—running their businesses.

Meet the Needs of Property Managers

MDU property owners and managers face a range of challenges as they strive to elevate the living experience and differentiate themselves in a competitive real estate market. They must meet the diverse needs and expectations of residents, which can vary widely and impact satisfaction and retention rates.

A top priority is ensuring reliable, high-quality services—including high-speed internet and Wi-Fi—while establishing favorable terms with service providers. Property owners and managers also aim to integrate advanced technologies, such as IoT devices and EV charging facilities, to meet the needs of current and future tenants. Above all, they need to ensure a convenient, safe, secure, and private experience for residents, businesses, guests, and staff.

You can help MDU owners and operators address these priorities while easing their operational burdens. Automation and self-service for residents allow for immediate service activation, providing a seamless experience that contributes to higher satisfaction. It also reduces manual intervention, streamlining processes and ensuring a more efficient service environment.

Property managers don't want to worry about installing networks or troubleshooting IT problems for every resident. By offering a managed service solution for MDUs, you give them an "easy button." They get a plug-and-play network that leverages the latest technologies, with hassle-free upgrades or replacements, all backed by local support. An intuitive property manager portal allows them to manage the experience within and across properties. They can easily enter new tenant information, assign them to living units, manage SSIDs and passphrases, connect property IoT systems, provide passphrases for EVs, and brand their roaming network and visitor portal.

Property managers can also take advantage of flexible business models. They can opt for a bulk model, where services are provided to all units with costs typically included in rent or association fees. They could choose a retail model, allowing individual residents to select their own service provider and pay directly. Or they can adopt a hybrid model, offering basic services in bulk with options for additional retail services.

Provide the Foundation
for Smart Buildings

MDUs that integrate IoT and EV facilities are redefining modern living by offering a seamless blend of technology and convenience. Residents can enjoy smart home features such as smart locks, automated lighting, temperature control, and enhanced security systems. These technologies not only elevate the resident experience by providing greater control and efficiency but also attract tech-savvy tenants looking for modern amenities. Additionally, property managers can leverage IoT to streamline building maintenance, monitor energy usage, detect property issues, and improve overall operational efficiency, ultimately leading to cost savings and a more sustainable living environment.

Incorporating EV charging stations is another key feature for MDUs looking to cater to the growing number of electric vehicle owners and connectivity for downloading connected vehicle updates. As more consumers adopt environmentally friendly transportation, providing convenient access to EV charging facilities becomes a significant differentiator in the real estate market. This is underscored by a study that found 36 percent of MDU residents viewed EV charging access as an important amenity for their next home.[vii] MDUs with these capabilities support sustainable living and help residents reduce their carbon footprint.

With a MDU managed services solution, you can provide a scalable, cloud-based platform that supports these advanced services. IoT management allows property managers to monitor and control various systems, such as HVAC, lighting, security, and energy usage, through a single interface. This enhances the operational efficiency of the property and reduces costs. Additionally, the platform ensures that all systems remain secure data and traffic remains separate from resident and staff data.

For residents, the benefits of living in a smart building are numerous. They can enjoy the convenience of connected living, with everything from temperature control to package delivery notifications available at their fingertips. Smart home integration also increases the property's value, making it more attractive to tech-savvy renters.

By offering a comprehensive platform that supports IoT and EV facilities, you can help property managers and residents alike embrace the future of living. This not only sets your services apart but also positions your business as a leader in the evolving MDU market.
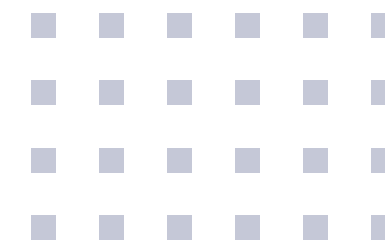
In Conclusion

Expanding into the MDU market presents a significant growth opportunity for BSPs and MSPs. By leveraging a flexible, scalable platform, you can offer a range of services that meet the diverse needs of residents, property managers, and communities. From managed Wi-Fi and smart building technologies to community partnerships, the potential for innovation and impact is vast.

As the demand for connected living continues to grow, service providers that embrace the MDU opportunity will be well-positioned to lead the market. By focusing on delivering exceptional experiences, building strong relationships with property managers, and engaging with communities, you can drive growth and create lasting value.

Calix can help BSPs unlock the MDU opportunity with SmartMDU. Purpose-built for service providers, SmartMDU positions you to service properties both inside your current footprint and in new territories. SmartMDU enables you to deliver cost-effective managed Wi-Fi services—once available only in luxury high-rise living—to all MDUs. It is flexible and scalable to serve properties of all types, sizes, and age. Moreover, it allows you to address the full range of MDU use cases: resident in-unit services, community Wi-Fi, staff and management, day guests and events, value-added services, IoT and security, connected vehicles, and small business networks. And because SmartMDU is integrated for the Calix Broadband Platform, it's easy to deploy, manage, and support the solution.

**Learn how you can capitalize on the MDU opportunity —
visit the [Calix SmartMDU website](#) and schedule a consult today.**
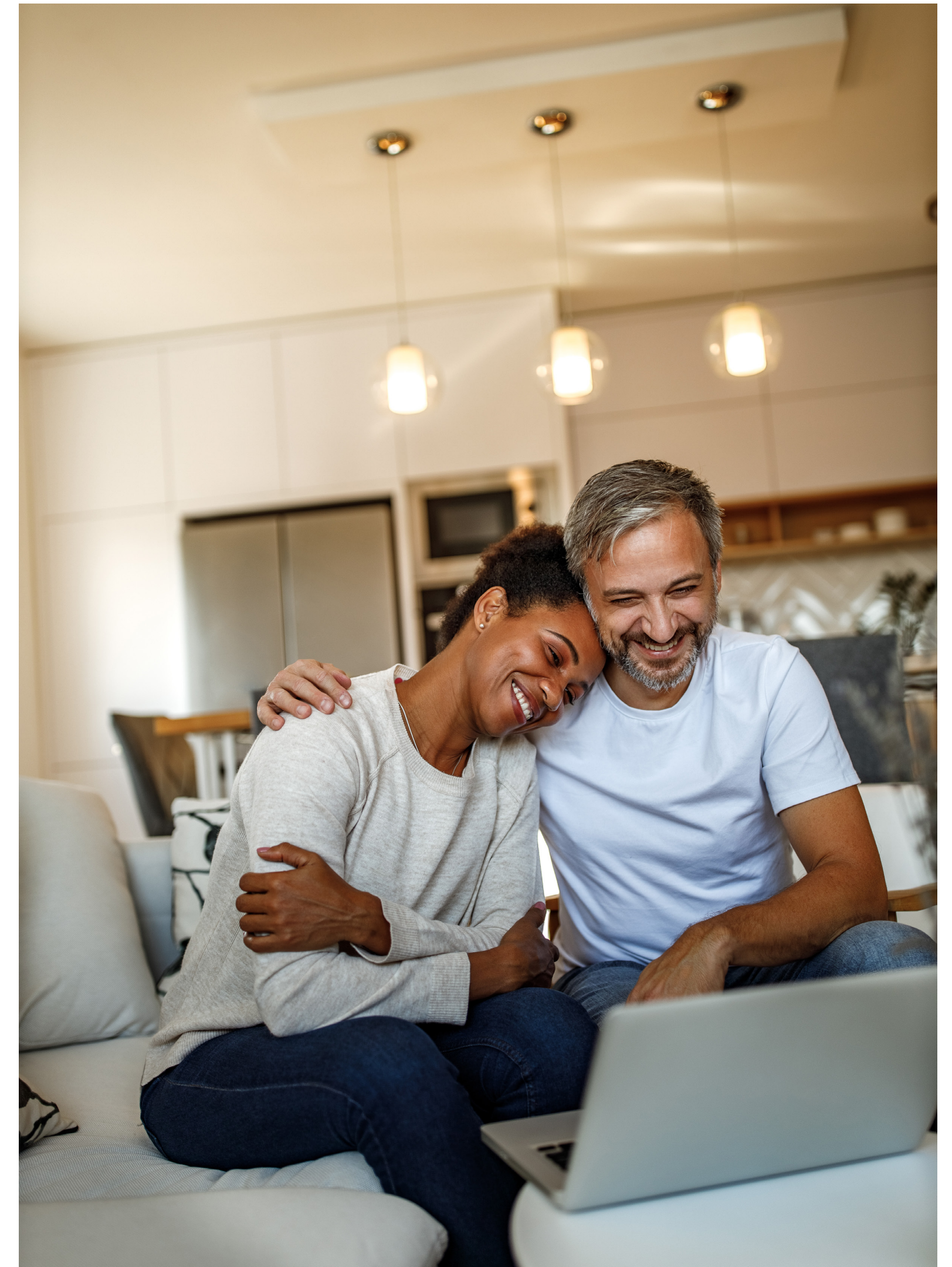
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