

Inside Story

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Community Management Associates

How can we keep community association managers positive in such a negative industry? Turnover is high and morale can be low. Every time the phone rings or an email arrives there's a problem that must be addressed or someone is upset about something and you are going to get an earful. Every word uttered in response or email sent is subject to intense scrutiny. It's a difficult job but what you do each day is important! You help homeowners and communities solve or at least manage their problems. Community association managers guide, advise, protect, solve, smooth, and save even though there are days it feels like you're drinking from a fire hose!

Every occupation has its difficulties. Most of us need meaningful work, to feel productive, useful and helpful in our daily lives. Community association managers have the constant of the unexpected to cope with along with the usual task of being the rule enforcer. Our occupation is somewhat similar to that of a police officer. You have a duty to enforce rules daily but those in violation will be angry regardless if it is for the benefit of entire community. We have to learn to cope with the stress, not take these interactions personally and accept that we aren't always going to be liked or appreciated.

How can community association managers cope with the everyday stress? Every person is different so a multitude of options are needed. Some may cope by escaping into a book or going for a walk. Pets often offer playful and loving support after a tough day. Calling a friend may help us forget our own day and connect with someone we hold dear. Try listening to music; it has a way of lifting the spirit. You could start a hobby or explore a new form of exercise. When things are really difficult you may choose to meditate or pray to get in touch with your higher power. Whatever avenue works for you is what you'll have to plug into to calm your own soul when you are feeling rattled. The important thing is to find something that works!

Association management companies ideally do their best to create workplaces that commit to programs and policies fostering employee health and wellbeing while boosting performance and productivity. If the managers are well adjusted they will convey that confidence to the public each day. This is vital for the success of the management company to have good people who represent them daily.

At Community Management Associates (CMA) we have many programs instituted to enhance employee retention and morale. We like to have fun! It's important to bring some levity to our daily lives to help provide some laughter and release. Some employees are practical jokers and luckily upper management has a good sense of humor to go along with the office pranks.

Annually we have a white elephant gift exchange. This becomes a serious competition to find the most ridiculous gift to give. CMA hosts a very nice holiday party after the holidays. This allows everyone to focus on their family obligations during the season and still have a party to look forward to in January. Employees are encouraged to dress up

and bring a guest. There are drinks, dinner, and dancing to music provided by a DJ. It's fun to socialize with all your co-workers together in one place all dressed up and having fun from the upper management to the maintenance guys.

Additional activities CMA sponsors to help boost employee morale and involvement include Cinco de Mayo party, Thanksgiving potluck lunch, Halloween costume party, happy hours, charity fundraisers, biggest loser weight loss competition, annual bowling tournament where our accounting staff seems to put together a team that is very difficult to beat. For the more daring employees CMA has hosted zip line tours and paint ball tournaments ~ ouch!

CMA observes the usual holidays as well as Boss's Day and Admin Day. This is an effort to cultivate a culture of appreciation of each other. Bring your pet to work and bring your child to work days are other ways we get to know each other on a more personal level. We all wear a lot of hats and the whole person should be valued.

CMA invests in each employee by paying for continuing education classes. They also provide small interest free loans to employees during the holidays. Together we cultivate our company culture to make our daily lives more enjoyable thus more productive. We each have a duty to do our part.

Take inventory... are you listening to gossip or participating in conversations that denigrate or diminish others? Instead, try to find something positive to say even if it's a simple compliment. Resist the urge to argue. It takes two people to argue. Listening quietly sometimes is the right action to allow the other person to be heard. Use common courtesy. Help others when you can. Find little ways to demonstrate to your co-workers you appreciate them. Don't forget to say thank you and you're welcome. It may seem small but in our daily battle with so much negativity a little kindness goes a long way.

