

Problem-Solving the Manager Hiring Shortage

BY AMY REPKE

The need for qualified community association managers to assist boards in fulfilling their responsibilities grows every year. Recruiting and retaining talented individuals in the profession requires management company executives to prioritize employee engagement and address challenges that can lead managers to feel unmotivated.

Community association management company CEOs and senior executives from around the country gathered in October at CAI's 2021 CEO-MC Retreat in Boca Raton, Fla., to gain insights on tackling these challenges.

According to the Foundation for Community Association Research's *Attracting Talent to the Community Association Management Industry* report, 59% of community managers surveyed say a toxic work environment is the top reason they would leave their job with a management company. Forty-two percent indicate that the lack of opportunity for advancement would lead them to quit, and 47% cite decreased morale as a reason for moving on to a company that is a better fit.



Keynote speaker **Jill Christensen**, an expert in employee engagement, presented four strategies that can lead to highly motivated

community managers:

Hire the right person for the role. Employee engagement starts with hiring. "You have to be incredibly selective in the hiring process. You must hire people who are both a good fit for the job and a good fit for the culture you are creating," says Christensen.

Create a line of sight. When employees feel a sense of purpose, they are more engaged and productive, which translates into a quicker execution of your company's strategy.

Build a two-way communication culture. Communicating openly and honestly and giving your employees

a forum to be heard by soliciting their input are critical to eradicating disengagement and building trust between employees and company leaders.

Recognize people. There's nothing more effective in the workplace, and in life, than a sincere "thank you" for a job well done. Be it written or spoken, the most powerful form of recognition is being acknowledged and appreciated.

In addition, Christensen notes that a major driver of employee engagement is whether individuals feel that leaders have a genuine concern for their well-being. She encourages management CEOs and senior executives to engage face to face with managers and other staff to show they are listening intently and completely present.

With these strategies, a positive leadership culture will spread to staff and, ultimately, to clients, Christensen says.



Elizabeth Caswell Dyer, CMCA, CEO of Sopra Communities in Denver, has been serving community associations for decades. As a

member of the 2021 CEO-MC Retreat Planning Committee, she was thrilled that CEOs and senior executives were able to gather again in person to share insights, best practices, and strategies to improve recruitment and retainment of community managers. "Our industry continues to be a great place to work, offering flexibility and work-life balance," she notes.

"Community association management executives have been resourceful facing new challenges in the past two years. We're continuing to support our employees and always thinking about our approach to serving our community association clients," Dyer adds. "We know that our industry is facing challenges, but it's also full of resilient leaders."

Amy Repke is CAI's vice president of communications and marketing.

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