



The Makings of a Great Board Member

*What are the characteristics that make for a great board member?
There isn't a prescribed checklist of skills, expertise or experience.
There are no absolute requirements to look for on a resume. So, what
factors should be included in putting together a description of the
dream candidate for an association board?*

Professional community managers are uniquely positioned to answer that question. As managers, we work closely with our community association boards and help facilitate many functions on their behalf. We see first-hand what qualities are key to success and what factors get in the way. We count on excellent board members as the recipe for our own success.

Whether you are already on a board or considering throwing your hat into the ring, there are a number of important character traits that can lead you to success as a community board member. Read on to understand what your community and community manager look for in board members and ultimately count on to achieve great outcomes.

BE COMMITTED

Community managers experience the best results when working with board members that show commitment to their role on the board. Board members that commit to their role take their board meetings very seriously – taking the time to become truly informed on the issues of the agenda, preparing in advance to ask questions of the manager and coming prepared to make informed and timely decisions. Your meeting time is precious. If your community holds one meeting per month that lasts two hours, that is a total of 24 meeting hours for the entire year. Your community manager and community rely on the board's commitment to attend the meeting well prepared and to execute critical decisions.

PROBLEM SOLVE WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Associations in California have to meet many challenges head on, such as working with the drought, aging common area elements, complaint-driven communication and ever changing legislation. Managers depend on board members with a problem-solver approach powered by a positive attitude to help the community win and overcome these challenges. Deep within a professional community manager's DNA is a true desire to help everyone and problem solve for the community. Managers come back meeting after meeting to better the community, and when those managers are supported by problem-solver board members with a positive attitude and that make informed and timely decisions, the sky is truly the limit!

RESPECT MANAGER'S TIME

Great board members respect the manager's time and the professional relationship. A professional relationship between the board members and management means the board understands that the association has delegated many tasks to the manager to service the community. Take a moment and think of the many tasks your manager accomplishes for your community, every day, every week, every month. Great board members realize unnecessary tasks, interference with association vendors or unnecessary e-mails to their manager interferes with their community manager effectively executing their duties. Community managers completely understand and support that board members have the ultimate responsibility for their community. To ensure you are receiving only the best management service for the association and its' members, work with your manager to establish check-in times to discuss service and give your manager relationship-building feedback.

CONFIRM, LEAD AND DIRECT

Board members need to know what is expected of managers and not assume the manager takes care of everything. Great board members have the leadership skills to recognize what is required in the contractual relationship with their professional management team. Community managers can do almost anything, but they can't do everything. Therefore, board members need to confirm the community manager's responsibilities and lead the community to be focused on the issues within the association's bandwidth of responsibility. Community managers rely on strong boards to keep their focus on what needs to get done and what is the best for the community, even when it is unpopular. Successful board members understand this and direct accordingly. Board members, your managers rely on you to remain strong and steadfast with the conviction to lead by selflessly caring for the needs of the community above all.

Great board members understand that a team approach made up of the board, community members and great management is the proven way for their community to thrive!

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