



Thank Your Manager!

by Betsy Barbieux

Now is the time of year to reflect on the things and people for which we are grateful. Residents and directors of community associations could add to their "I am grateful for" list the managers who serve them and their associations. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Managers shoulder many of the tasks involved in managing hundreds of thousands up to millions of dollars worth of property and assets. Managers warn board members when they are about to make wrong

decisions in managing those pricey assets. How hard it must be for managers to watch their directors make costly mistakes. Thank you for patiently working with us to undo the damage.

- Managers understand the documents and requirements of the law. Thank you for all the times you tell directors to get legal opinions before they proceed with an uncertain course of action. Woe to the board that is too cheap to spend the money for attorney's fees or that does not heed the advice of counsel.
- Managers understand the conceptual mission statement presumed by the Florida Statutes that govern community associations. Thank you for reminding directors their mission is to provide for the protection of the property and its value, maintain the property, and enforce the restrictions found in the governing documents. If it weren't for you reminding us of our purpose, we would waste precious time on decisions outside the scope of our purpose.
- Managers understand that board members do not serve a constituency; that is, our governance is not truly democratic. We are not supposed to vote the wishes of the people or vote to maintain our popularity. Thank you for reminding us our votes have to be in the best interest of the association as a whole; to vote in line with our mission statement.
- Managers are bound by their license to be certain all the association funds are placed in the proper

accounts. Managers understand the statutory mandates for budgets and reserve accounts. Thank you for all the times you keep the board from making terrible mistakes when they wanted to "move" money around from reserves to the operating account.

- Managers have to look to the future and anticipate and plan for deferred maintenance and capital expenditures for assets such as balcony and concrete restoration, pool and pavement resurfacing, and the clubhouse roof replacement. Thank you for insisting that we fully fund our reserves.
- Managers deal with people, pets, parking, and the pool all day long. Thank you for being a therapist, veterinarian, and parking and pool monitor.
- Managers understand that rules enforcement is part of living in a community association. Thank you for reminding residents and directors that timely enforcement of violations is in the course of business and is not to be taken personally.
- Managers know it is wise to move quickly to foreclose a lien or sue a resident for unpaid fines for a rules violation. Thank you for stepping in and doing the hard work so we do not lose the enjoyment of living in our communities.
- Managers have residents call them at all times of the day and night when they should be calling the police or locksmith. Thank you for all the times you answered your telephone and helped, even when it wasn't in your contract or job description.
- Managers work hard during the off season to maintain the common area so residents' investments will increase. Thank you for being able to come home to a beautiful community every fall.
- Managers have to learn conflict prevention and negotiation skills. Thank you for the times you did not yell back at a resident who was having a bad day or forgot to take his meds or who is truly a mean, hateful person.
- Managers take 20 hours of classes every two years to keep up with the new laws and changes in the industry. Thank you for keeping yourself current on community association management.
- Managers know that with each election of directors, their contracts could be cancelled. Thank you for not bailing out on us when your future seemed uncertain.
- Managers go over and above the requirements of exercising due professional care by taking a personal interest in our associations. Thank you for your goodwill and devotion to our community.
- Managers interview and consult with experts, engineers, contractors, vendors, attorneys, and accountants. Thank you for doing that for us so we can enjoy the pool, golf course, clubhouse, and tennis courts.
- Managers know how to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. Thank you for all the money you save us by your reviews and recommendations of our insurance policies, pool and lawn maintenance contracts, and vendors' bids and contracts.

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- Managers plan ahead for disasters, large and small. They have prevention, preparation, and restoration plans for everything from chlorine spills to erosion, wildfires to water pipe breaks, elevator failures to mold and mildew, structural collapse to red tide, and sea wall failures to hurricanes and tornadoes. Thank you for taking care of all these details for us.

Managers sometimes have to act as the referee at board meetings and annual elections. Thank you for stepping in and reminding us to act like adults and be civil to each other.

- Managers know the responsibilities they bear in allowing owner access to records, but they also know that directors have an equal if not higher responsibility for allowing owner access to records. Thank you for knowing the statutory timeframes and the documents that may and may not be accessed by owners.
- Managers know and love their residents and take a special interest in them. Thank you for calling me about my mother and letting me know she wasn't doing well and, despite her protests, she really did need me to come help her.

- Managers spent long extra hours, weeks, and months restoring properties after the devastating hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005. Thank you for putting everything back in order for us.
- Managers know the statutory meeting notice requirements for board meetings, membership meetings, budget meetings, and annual elections. Thank you for reminding us of those so we stay out of court.

- Managers understand budgets, reserves, financials, and the difference between "fully funded" and "fully funding." Thank you that we can depend on you and don't have to know about such things.
- Managers can often quote the statutes and documents verbatim. Thank you that we don't have to know what 617, 718, 719, 720, and 721 are, or that the declaration contains restrictions that "run with the land", or the difference between the articles of incorporation and by-laws, or have to concern ourselves with what on earth is a proprietary lease. Thank you that you know the difference between the documents that govern the business of the association and those that govern the behavior of the residents.
- Managers deal with many ethnic and religious groups, are often bilingual, and have to be aware of customs and practices of their overseas residents. Thank you for being a terrific international diplomat.
- Managers sometimes have to act as the referee at board meetings and annual elections. Thank you for stepping in and reminding us to act like adults and be civil to each other.

Thank you for being our manager! Happy Thanksgiving!

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