



## **#287 HOA Homefront – Manager: It Might Be You, Or Maybe Us**

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Many associations struggle with a poor manager relationship, resulting in a frustrated board or a terminated manager. However, such struggles can sometimes arise from the board's actions and likewise can be resolved by a change in board practices.

Truly, some managers are simply not cut out for the job. The need for excellent HOA managers increases along with the growing number of community associations. However, some are poorly qualified, overloaded with too many associations, disorganized, poor at customer relations, or even unethical and dishonest. No excuses can be made for such managers, and they should not be accepted.

However, some managers are not allowed to succeed in their roles, as boards set them up for failure. Before an association gives up on its manager, ask if any of the following factors are present.

*You don't, so I will* – Often, a director who performs managerial tasks will explain that "somebody has to do it." This will insulate a poor manager from responsibility from their performance and will discourage a good manager who wants to do their job.

*What we have here is a failure to communicate* – Many boards never establish expectations regarding communication flow, including the designated points of contact, and what type of response time is reasonable. Set mutually agreed expectations and make sure both management and board honor that agreement. Remember, not everything needs to be handled now. Your manager probably receives over a hundred emails a day from homeowners, so allow them to triage the critical from the lesser.

*The handcuffed manager* – If a board does not trust the manager, then the association may need another manager. However, if the manager is trusted, why should they not be given a reasonable amount of spending authority, so long as they report monthly to the board? Requiring the board approve in advance every sprinkler head or window replacement bogs the manager down and involves the board in minutiae.

*Who's the Boss?* – Managers work for the corporation, which acts through its board, but some HOA presidents do not understand their role as president of non-profit is less powerful than the for-profit president. A president who orders the manager around short-circuits the association governance and forces the manager to choose between proper governance and good client relations.



*Managers should be seen and not heard* – Many a fine manager’s morale is damaged by boards which refuse to accept their expertise, treating the manager as clerks instead of trusted professionals. Association boards should insist their manager be experienced and knowledgeable and should benefit from that experience and knowledge.

*Civility deficiency* – If a manager is treated rudely, why is it fair to expect a great attitude in return? It is not - the Golden Rule applies to managers also.

*Trading manager in for a new model* – When a new board begins service, particularly after a contentious election, it often replaces the manager, wanting their “own”. This is often simply a knee-jerk and unfair assumption as to the manager, who must be loyal to the association, not who runs it at any point in time.

If a manager has been given every opportunity to succeed and still fails, ask their employer to assign another manager to the account, before assuming the company should be terminated.