

## **Property Managers – Are you directing your best efforts on managing your property management system?**

As you already know there is no shortage of management activities and events that requires your attention. Owners, prospects, tenants, vendors and staff all require ongoing communications and varying degrees of oversight. In the first chapter of my book, "Property Management Systems - From A to Z" I identified the 19 Specific Duties of the Property Manager listed on the DRE (now the BRE) web site. None of the items specifically addressed the "system".

Note : for most of my 30 years working with systems and systems clients I have promoted a definition of a system which includes the following elements:

- The equipment which include PC's, Servers, printer/ copier/ scanners, etc., but may now also include remote devices, i.e. Smartphones, tablets and/ or laptops.
- The software consisting of the property management program and support programs which may include word processing, spreadsheets, payroll, communication programs, and the Internet.
- The procedures which hopefully are written that identify in detail the what, when, and how special processing takes place to deal with important and special concerns, i.e. mortgage and property tax payments processing.
- The staff, including management which performs the 19 activities plus possibly dozens of additional items related to industry oriented education, systems security and mandated regulations.

Identifying the four components of a system does provide some value in categorizing the components which are working properly and which are not. Once categorized correctly specific actions can be directed to correcting that portion of the system needing repairs, replacement , updating and /or additional training.

Far too often, my observations based on systems consults, evaluations, training and support activities have indicated a major lack of management involvement in the system. It is quite likely that increased management efforts related to the system will provide a multitude of benefits. It is most important that management play a major role in the evaluation and selection of a system. Choosing the wrong system is a disaster. Due diligence must be established and maintained. "Doovers" are costly in time, money, morale and potentially staff. See "Shopping For Software" NARPM Article – May 2008 -

The right system provides presumably for ten years or more at a reasonable cost. Management's role is then to continue to promote Increased productivity and improved operations through the use of advanced features and technology. This is a major ongoing management responsibility. Far too often management limits or even worse, abandons their involvement in their system. Your system most

likely has the capability to support and/ or replace many of the 19 traditional duties identified in the DRE/ BRE web site and others as new government mandates, rules and regulations are created.

A requirement however, is that management must lead the way. It requires the following:

- Management must be aware of the features, innovations and technology the system provides. Resources may include local systems consultants, and /or systems developer resources, i.e. blogs, videos, support and training services.
- Management must prioritize the above capabilities as to which system capabilities provide the best increases in productivity, and /or cost reductions.
- Management must promote the project and begin to create an office systems culture.
- Management must arrange for training of staff and planning for implementation of the designated features. Generally a project leader must be assigned to the project. Note: This usually would be a senior staff member, but could be assigned to a young 'Hard charger'.
- Management must provide oversight on the project including scheduling, training, status and results.
- Management must recognize and reward staff members who provide notable assistance in promoting and implementing features that accelerate productivity.
- Management must then repeat the process.

Our observations over the last 30 years with hundreds of fee property managers and some owner/ operators have generally indicated that their systems management efforts are lacking. On occasion none existed. In those circumstances a senior staffer may have assumed the role that management should perform. That could be a short term benefit, but too often results in problems. A strong staff member who acquires a leadership role without management oversight can be a blessing or a disaster. Lack of oversight can result in incomplete, inaccurate, and / or illegal operations that cripple your productivity, your reputation, and your company.

It is a serious undertaking to assume a strong role of managing your system, It should however, create benefits and provide additional insights as to the true potential of your system and your property management company.

Note: Dick's 30 years in property management systems has provided many important insights into good and bad system management activities, characteristics and operations. Some promote the likelihood of potential disasters. A system evaluation may preclude a major system based disaster.

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