

# in the board room

# Volunteers Wanted

By Frank Jouregui, CCAM

**C**alifornia has been and continues to be a bastion of cultural and ethnic diversity. There's truly no state within our national melting pot that holds such a large sampling of multi-generational family units, robust cultural wealth, and economy that, in spite of a pandemic, rivals and supersedes most countries in the world.

HOAs are but a microcosm of our golden state. More and more, we are seeing an influx of culturally diverse owners. No longer is the HOA a final destination for those who are looking to retire and spend their remaining days in comfort.

Instead, our communities are injected with new vigor as young professionals and young families bring a vitality to these neighborhoods when they move in, bringing with them fresh ideas of what makes a community great!

But with the influx of so many different types of people with their own particular worldviews and values, how can a

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*Seek out members who are professionals in their fields. Showcase their achievements and successes to keep them engaged.*

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community attract these diverse people to serve in one of the most selfless fiduciary positions within an association (i.e. serving on your friendly neighborhood board of directors)?

You can do two things:

1. You attract great owners into becoming board members by showcasing how gifted they are.
2. You retain great board members by telling them how valuable their uniqueness is to the board.

## SHOWTIME

As community managers, we all know and are aware that being a board member carries a paradox of sorts with it – it is the most powerful job anyone in the association can have yet it comes with zero “thanks” and a pay of zero dollars to match.

So how do you attract your most gifted and talented members to even consider running for the board?

Encourage your current board members to be as transparent as possible on community needs by inviting neighbors to join a committee. Which committee? Any committee? Most of my board members were elected to their positions after serving as a volunteer on a committee to fulfill a need in their community.

On those committees, try to encourage board members to partner up with talented non-board, committee members who can lend their gifts to the board in solving difficult issues. Especially seek out owners who are professionals in their



fields, such as architecture, finances, and construction.

Make sure to showcase the achievements and successes of each committee member. Everyone wants to know that they have done a good job and that their work has been recognized for the value and benefit that it brought to the table. Showcase them in your newsletters and lavish upon them sincere thanks for their work, and in no time, you'll have a lot of them come forward to ask, "What can I do next for you?"

The main reason people in committees make the transition into a board is because they are appreciated and openly thanked for their specific brand of excellence. But once you have the preferred board members seated on your board, you need to start working on retention.

#### ATTENTION TO RETENTION

Every hard-fought battle in world history has its normal course of action of working to retain the great gains that have been made. Likewise, in association management, we work to retain the great gains we accomplish when we attract

those unique individuals to serve on our boards.

No matter how hard you try, board members all too often can become discouraged and feel the heavy weight of their position. So much so that they burn out from donating themselves over and over again.

What I have found to help in preventing board members from burning out and keeping excellent directors from leaving is by having management take a proactive approach. I have stated in board meetings to both incumbent and prospective board members that management is here to make their time on the board as productive and as smooth as possible.

Management seeks to let their board members know that we are here to relieve them of having to worry about the day-to-day burdens of executing mundane activities for an association. Not only this, but I believe that we can help retain board members by truthfully outlining the importance and value that these people bring to the board.

We want to make sure all board members realize the importance of their gift and how much they are appreciated by other board members, the membership, and management for the abilities they have.

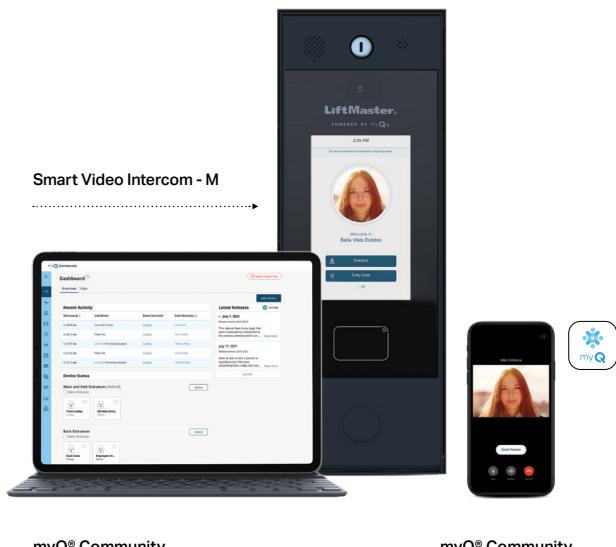
I believe this two-pronged approach works well in most scenarios to attract and retain talented board members, but much like jazz, it can be a work of improvisation confined by defined parameters.

What methods do you incorporate to scout for talented board member prospects and what systems do you have in place to harness the power of your valuable board members?



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