

## recruit for attitude: leasing and management

When recruiting and interviewing for leasing and management positions it is not always essential or beneficial to recruit individuals with years of industry experience or service. All too often the self proclaimed 'experienced' and 'skilled' property managers are far too set in their ways to adapt to change and often bring with them a negative influence on the division that impacts poorly on the whole team. Recruit for attitude and train for skill.

Pose the question and ask why they are leaving their current agency. Is it because they have genuinely outgrown their role, or because they believe the agency is not supporting them? Whilst this may be true in some instances, you may see a pattern in their employment history that has them 'jumping ship' every nine to 18 months. The more skilled the person is at covering things up the longer they will stay with their current employer. When the problems and errors are too numerous and onerous for them you will find this is usually when they are unable to 'cover up' any longer and so resign with a plethora of excuse and will blame others and circumstances. By checking their employer movement history a pattern will quite often reveal itself.

However, whilst experience is very beneficial as they may also bring with them fresh new ideas and in many ways stability, it is not usually the experience that is beneficial. They must demonstrate more important, beneficial and sustaining qualities such as:

- **Passion** – A real burning desire to succeed as a property manager and be able to discuss with you openly the concerns currently faced by the profession and their vision for the future. If there is no vision for the future, there is usually no passion. By asking questions about their vision, passion and commitment you will be able to feel the energy and see the fire that burns within them glowing in their eyes. If it is not there, there is no commitment.
- **People skills** – Do you find that they are genuinely open and honest and a person that you can relate easily too. Don't be afraid to ask how they respond to various situations and you will soon discover if they have people skills that your clients will warm to. Property managers need to be empathetic, warm and genuine. Without these skills clients will not grant them the respect that is required in such a demanding role. Property managers must be firm and assertive when necessary, but there is no room for aggression.
- **Personality** – Do they have a pulse? Do they have a pleasant, likeable and even magnetic personality? Do they have a sense of humor and are able to see the lighter

side of a situation or do they appear to be stressed and under pressure? As part of their role, property managers are constantly being interviewed by clients. They will need to stay calm and remain confident in their abilities and have the aptitude to 'think on their feet' in all situations.

- **Life-Long learning** – When was the last time the applicant undertook any self enrolled, continuing, or further education or training? Or have they been working in the industry for so long there are no further courses for them to undertake? A commitment to ongoing training, learning and knowledge gathering displays their personal dedication to be the best and staying on top. A quality that keeps an agency always at the cutting edge. Don't be tempted with a 'Dinosaur's' so called experience. We are in a 'technology age' now.
- **On purpose person** – Is the applicant an 'on purpose' person, or do they just roll with the punches? Effective, efficient and productive property managers must be highly organized, know how to prioritize tasks, be able to handle left field events at a moments notice and not have a panic attack, create and work to a scheduled and task orientated 'ideal week'. Or are they so experienced that they just do a task as necessary and wonder why they work such long hours and still never seem to complete their work? Usually they will suggest that the fault lies firmly with the business owner as they expect too much of the property manager. Seek the applicant's response to how many properties they manage in their portfolio, what average hours they work in a week, how they organize their routine inspections and what their idea of time management is.
- **Ethical, professional and with the utmost integrity** – Does the applicant speak highly of their past employer or display diplomacy if the relationship didn't work out quite as they had hoped? What has been their experience with past clients and team members? Seek qualities where the applicant is diplomatic yet honest, sees a positive side to events and sees problems as challenges that have assisted them in their development. If they are all too eager to lay blame, speak unkindly of others, be eager to take business away from a previous employer then they do not display qualities that are integral to a successful and prospering property management division or team.
- **Teachable** – Are they teachable, or have they been doing everything their way since they commenced in the industry and it works well, so there is no need to try any new systems, technology and developments? Will they actively participate in team meetings, seminars and one-on-ones, and embrace introduced changes to make their own life more successful, or will they begrudge the time 'wasted' for these symposiums?
- **Targets and accountability** – Are they prepared to work to goals and targets and be accountable for their day? Property managers are placed in a position of trust. They will

be required to account for productivity levels and be measured against Key Analysis Performance Indicators and strive towards achieving predetermined goals and targets.

- **Presentation** – What is their dress standard? Have they attended the interview in a business suit that is clean, pressed and stylish? Do they look comfortable in it? Is their hair tidy? If they are a female, have they taken the time to carefully and thoughtfully apply make-up, suitable for business attire. Are their shoes tidy and clean? Are they calm, prepared and on time? All of these qualities display genuine interest in being chosen for the available position.
- **Question and answer time** – Before concluding the interview, ask the applicant if they have any questions. Well thought out questions are indications of their level of interest in the offered position. Questions about the company, other team members, business plan, and opportunity for advancement are advantageous.
- **Negotiation** – When their salary package is offered are they prepared to negotiate, justify and rationalize their worth to the company and division or do they just settle for what is on offer? If a generous salary package is being offered and they accept without any discussion, this could be an indication that they have never worked in the capacity required or are prepared to accept anything. If they display negotiation skills, this is an obvious benefit to the business and clients.