Congratulations, you received your CAM license and are now a working property manager. You are now a part of the CAM community and think you know all there is to know about being a good property manager, or do you?

Property managers have to deal with many different situations and many types of people. Learning how to deal with these different people who may or may not think the way you do, who think they know everything there is to know about managing a property, or tell you to do something their way or take the highway requires not only the knowledge...
acquired in school but experience and time.

Let’s get specific. Suppose you make a recommendation to the board of directors to carry out a project that needs to be done for safety reasons; a perfect example would be pressure cleaning an area that is full of mold and, in your mind, could cause a slip and fall hazard. You write a memo to the board stating the problem and asking for permission to get bids for the project. After receiving your memo, the board either tables your request or turns it down entirely. What do you do?

Here is where the lessons in life come in and schooling plays no part in your actions! You have to get to know the movers and shakers on the board and make it known to them that if no action is taken, then they can be held liable if someone slips on the moldy area and suffers an injury. You also have to become aware of the reason or reasons why the project was turned down. In most cases, it will come down to an issue of money. This is where the prudent manager, must point out that saving a few dollars by not doing the project may potentially cost thousands of dollars to defend a lawsuit for any sustained injuries. Even more extreme is the potential of having a negligence claim filed against the board and individual board members for failing to cure a known hazard.

The other part of this scenario is to make sure that you have documented your request in writing and receive in writing—via minutes or memo—the decision of the board. There are cases where there has been no paper trail to show the series of events that have led up to decisions made by a board or by one person on a board who takes matters into his or her own hands without full board approval.

The sister scenario to the above is where the board of directors takes action that is contrary to F.S. 718 or 720. Here your schooling knowledge comes into play. If a board knowingly takes an action that is deliberate and is contrary to Florida Statutes or the documents of the association, it is incumbent upon you, as the licensed CAM, to make every effort to let the board know what they are doing is wrong. You cannot and should not be silent on this issue. If you do nothing, you are just as culpable as the members of the board. Again, make sure that whatever action is taken, you have a paper trail to show that the board went against your advice.

One of the most frustrating aspects of managing a community is dealing with the angry homeowner. There are many ways you can handle this type of situation; the overriding rule is not to lose your cool! Always do your best to make the angry person understand that you are on the property to help maintain their property values, and the only way this can be done is to enforce the restrictions contained within the documents of the association and the rules promulgated by the board. It is very important to be a good listener.
Listen to the complaint, take a deep breath, and then state your case. In most situations, once the angry party vents their complaint, they will cool down and listen to your side of the story. You are not there to argue or get into a fight with an owner. If the situation gets out of hand, the best thing you can do is to report the incident to the board and let them contact the owner. The one thing you can always say when someone is yelling at you is, “I will speak with you, but you have to calm down and speak to me in a civil manner.” You are a professional and how you act, when things get a bit hairy, will be noticed by your peers.

The first problem we cited asked that you use your life experiences to handle a problem; the second scenario requires you to use your knowledge of the law, and the last problem requires you to use both. What do you do when you have an ongoing project that is going to disrupt the daily lives of the members of the association?

Sometimes, it is impossible to schedule a much-needed project—roofing, air conditioning, and plumbing—at a time that is convenient to all concerned parties. You have to deal with the schedule of the contractor hired to do the work, the time of year that the project is going to be done, and, of course, the obvious inconvenience of the owners while the work is being done. Here communication to all parties is of utmost importance.

A letter to all concerned parties should be the first item on your to-do list when it comes to planning for any major project that affects the residents of an association. Most residents will understand their lives being interrupted if they are given advance notice of an impending project. This is not to say that everyone will be happy to be inconvenienced, but once the initial shock of the scope of work is explained, most people will make arrangements to change their lifestyle for the period when their unit is not accessible.

If it can be avoided, postpone scheduling a roofing project during the rainy season. Having to shut down air conditioning units during the summer season should also be postponed. There is no way to guarantee that everyone living in a community will be happy when needed projects have to be done, but proper planning and communication is the key to diminishing the amount of stress that will be put on owners, the board, and you as the manager of the association.

Now that we have outlined some of the problems that you face as a licensed CAM, we should point out that our profession is a vital part of association management, and while we will always face new challenges, when dealing with them, your knowledge, people skills, and confidence are the keys to making things better for your community association.

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KW Property Management and Consulting Goes International with New Client Bimini Bay in the Bahamas

KW Management and Consulting has been selected to handle property management services for Bimini Bay in the Bahamas, a residential development with 384 private residences.

“The addition of Bimini Bay in the Bahamas strengthens the depth and breadth of our residential property management services on an international basis, in addition to our well known expertise in Florida and recent expansion into New York City and Nashville.” says Robert White, Co-Managing Director, KW Property Management and Consulting.

KW Property Management and Consulting’s role includes managing the 384 private residences. Miami-based Capo Group and real estate developer Gerardo Capo developed Bimini Bay after purchasing the land in 1998. The property’s other upscale amenities includes a 374-unit resort hotel with rooms, suites, and luxury villas and a casino under construction. The 230-slip marinas form the centerpiece of the resort, and with two separate marinas—Fisherman’s Village Marina (136 slips) and the Mega-Yacht Marina (96 slips)—both equipped with concrete floating docks.

One of the largest on-site management companies in Florida, KW Property Management and Consulting currently manages numerous premier properties in South Florida including the Atlantis Condominium on Brickell Avenue, Turnberry Village in Aventura, and 900 Biscayne Bay Condominiums in Downtown Miami.

KW Property Management and Consulting, a leader in turnkey management and consulting across Florida, with additional offices in Nashville and New York City and more than 600 employees statewide, provides a professional and independent approach to property management. From upscale high-rises, to homeowners associations, and garden-style townhomes, they meet the needs of more than 40,000 unit owners. For more information, visit www.kwpropertymanagement.com.