



MEMBERANDUM: By Invitation Only

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Clubs desire active members, however, more frequent users are also the most likely to encounter problems. Anyone who has ever worked in a club that caters to both residential and non-residential members knows this combination adds additional layers of complexity.

I am delighted to introduce Alex Raimondi who is a veteran manager unafraid to try new ideas. Alex understands the mindset of members who live at their clubs and have heavily invested in their clubs' success, and he has dealt with seasonality which further complicates things. His recent positions include the Polo Club of Boca Raton and Nashawtuc in Concord, MA. Alex is looking for his next opportunity so clubs with vacancy take notice. Alex may be reached at alexandi@comcast.net.

Damon DeVito, Managing Director
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CHALLENGES OF MANAGING AN HOA RESIDENTIAL GOLF COMMUNITY

By Alex Raimondi, alexandi@comcast.net

All club managers desire to protect the assets of the club and provide members with outstanding, memorable experiences. HOA residential golf communities place additional pressures on club management. Because members live on the property, they are likely to use club amenities more frequently and feel more entitled than members of non-resident clubs. Anxiety about their property value also can become entangled with feelings about the club.

Resident members consider the club an extension of their home and tend to be far more critical of service levels and amenities. Since resident members are more visible and wish to stay within the gates of their community, the club must create a sense of belonging and offer a greater variety of exciting events and programs, continually making adjustments to maintain a high degree of member satisfaction and participation.

Amenities Aren't Enough

In addition to offering the standard dining, social, golf and tennis events, many HOA residential clubs extend their services to meet the various needs of their membership. Providing these services at levels that satisfy both year-round and seasonal members can be a quite a challenge. Here are some with which I've had success:

- **Concierge services**, which provide preferred vendors and rates for executive car services, automobile rental agencies, hotels, travel arrangements and dry cleaning services.
- **Homeowners' management services**, such as trash removal, lawn maintenance, winter close-down services, pest removal, housekeeping, hurricane preparation and approved/preferred service providers.
- **Cultural arts and education programs** that may include computer training classes, driving classes, trips to performing arts events, art classes, card lessons, book clubs, lecture series and excursions to national parks, to name a few.
- **Security**, whether as a gatehouse, 24-hour patrol, or other visible form of safety.
- **A service department** that manages facility maintenance, coordinates resident events, books private events and works with the sub-associations within the master association to handle rental and leasing arrangements within the community and for the club.

Catering to Seasonal Residents

During the winter months, southern residential clubs actually morph into resort communities. Seasonal members who come south to enjoy the warm climate and relaxing environment increase demands on club management to be creative in offering a lifestyle with superior services and amenities while still maintaining the club culture and traditions.

When in residence, seasonal members expect a full array of resort-style amenities and services without leaving the confines of their gated club community. Year-round resident members, who expect the same lifestyle, may sense the seasonal members are treated preferentially since services and programs are greatly expanded during their winter residency. This perception can be countered by extensive communication, member education and by constantly creating new and exciting events. However, the perception between year-round and seasonal members creates an ongoing animosity between the two groups and a constant challenge for club management to keep both satisfied.

Focus on Extraordinary Service

Resident member club managers face the challenge of juggling the operation of a club that doubles as a resort facility, maintaining a residential community that must preserve home values and providing superior levels of consistent services with a personal touch to maintain pride of ownership to sustain resident members. Staff must be educated about members' expectations and have a system for constant improvements. By maintaining excellent communication, trust and respect with members and staff services and programs will remain successful.

Damon DeVito is co-founder and Managing Director of Affinity Management. Affinity was founded in 1997 and provides advisory services and professional management to private clubs, golf courses, equestrian facilities and other member-based businesses. For more information on Affinity Management, visit www.affinitymanagement.com or call (434) 817-4570.

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