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12 "Must Have" Qualities of an On Site Manager

by Shaya Stauber

Having an onsite manager can be extremely effective even when not required by law. It is crucial to hire the right person, or they can be a waste of money and can cause serious harm. Here are 12 things to look for when hiring an onsite Manager.

1. Polite, Kind and Patient:

They should be enjoyable to speak with and someone you would want as your neighbor, because that is how tenants think when meeting them.

2. Punctual: Tenants are busy and if the onsite manager is late to show a unit, the tenant

Having managers that have rigid schedules with little flexibility makes it difficult to manage a building where anything can happen at any time.

will leave and not give the building a second chance.

3. Computer Literate: They don't need to be comput-

er programmers, but they should be competent with email, Microsoft Office and able to learn a new program if necessary. Having a manager that doesn't use email or a computer can make your job twice as hard.

4. Job History: You want to make sure they currently have responsibility and know how to handle different situations. Call their current employer to get a sense of their work ethic. *[Also, be sure to run a credit and eviction report as you would on*

a regular tenant.]

5. Enthusiastic About Work:

This is like any job; the happier they are the better they perform. You don't want someone who is only doing this for a paycheck, because they will grow tired of it and it will affect their performance. You want a person who loves interacting with people and is enthusiastic about it.

6. Have Flexible Hours: If

they can show a unit in middle of the day on short notice, or meet a repairman for an emergency it will be very helpful. Having managers that have rigid schedules with little flexibility

makes it difficult to manage a building where anything can happen at any time.

7. A Couple Where One Spouse Stays Home: This

is the ultimate flexibility and being able to show units on short notice will help rent vacancies quicker. When the onsite manager is usually at the property it gives the property an advantage over other buildings where a prospect needs to wait to see a unit. It also makes residents feel more comfortable having someone there watching the building.

8. Handy: Having someone who knows how to change a switch or put a washer on

a sink will save time and money. Not having to call a handyman every time will keep both you and the tenant happy. This isn't a requirement, but will be very helpful and cost effective.

9. Stays Calm Under Pressure: Managing a building

can be stressful and things always come up, so they need to be able to keep a level head and make the correct decision. Many times managers are yelled at by tenants, and they need to answer politely, handle it with professionalism and not exacerbate an already tense situation.

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10. Bilingual: This will not only help with potential tenants, but allows them to communicate with current tenants. In some buildings where most tenants don't speak English, this should be a requirement. Trying to have a tenant explain a leaky sink in broken English can be frustrating for both parties and will often lead to a miscommunication where the problem is not resolved.

11. Speaks Clearly: This may sound obvious or trivial, but the first interaction a potential tenant has is on the phone. If the manager is speaking quickly or un-

clearly the tenant will probably give up and move on to the next building. I have seen managers mumble or speak so fast you can't understand them and it makes leasing a unit difficult.

12. Follows Orders: Many times people feel they know how to do it best, or their way is the right way, and this can be problematic. You want a manager who will give you their opinion, but follow what you tell them, even if they don't agree. I have seen managers do the opposite of what they are told and this can't happen.

Having an onsite manager can either make your building a real community where no one wants to leave or a place where every tenant will leave the second their lease is over. It is all about getting the right person for the job. There are no guarantees, but these tips should help you find the right one for the job. ■

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