

Residential Resource

November 2003

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The Mission of NARPM is to support professional and ethical practices of rental home management through networking, education, and certification.

500 Resumes Just Arrived... Which One Is the Property Management SuperStar?

by Ernest F. Oriente, *The Coach*

Finding a new SuperStar for your property management company is never an easy task, especially in our current economic climate. In addition, a recent article published by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) says, "over 50% of the information presented on a resume by a job candidate may be false or misleading." In this article, we will share some important tips and techniques for reading resumes, the most important first step for finding property management SuperStars.

SORTING THE RESUMES

Resumes will generally arrive by mail, e-mail or fax. Start by sorting these resumes into three stacks. The "A" stack will include resumes from potential SuperStars who will attach a customized cover letter. This cover letter will address you personally and will often include specific references to the advertisement you placed. The "B" stack will include resumes from possible SuperStars who will only attach a generic cover letter. The "C" stack will include those who will just send a resume and represent the least likely group to contain a SuperStar.

SETTING UP YOUR SYSTEM

Purchase an 8-1/2" x 11" flat desk file with A-Z tabs. A flat desk file looks like an accordion



file, except it lays flat on your desk and can be easily carried with you. Use your A-Z desk file to store the resumes of potential new SuperStars, sorted by last name. When a person returns your initial telephone call or arrives for their first interview, you will now have their resume right at your fingertips.

TIPS FOR READING A RESUME

Here are some key questions to consider when

reading a resume:

- What city/state does this person live in? How long will their commute to work be? If this person does not live locally, how long will it take for them to acclimate professionally and personally?
- Does this resume include an E-mail address? Does this resume portray a person who is technology savvy?
- How many companies has this person worked for in the past five years? Are the companies related? Any time gaps?
- What skills and experience can this person bring to your property management team?
- Does this resume include specific and measurable achievements?

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Aloha Kakou! (Hello everyone)

Greetings to all! We had a wonderful 15th annual convention on the beautiful island of Hawaii! The incredible weather, outstanding hotel, meeting rooms, and insightful workshops created this once-in-a-lifetime event. Many conventioners appreciated that the workshops ended earlier than normal to help accommodate the incredible sightseeing opportunities and some pool or beach time. A very warm "Mahalo" to the Big Island Chapters and the outstanding Convention Committee for a job well done!

We celebrated many accomplishments in Hawaii. Many of the committees met with their members to tie up loose ends for 2003, while strategically planning for 2004. The second annual Rocky Maxwell New Member Achievement Award was graciously bestowed upon Big Island Chapter member Sherry Mastro. We had 19 chapters receive the prestigious Chapter Excellence Award — significant efforts and kudos to these chapters and their leaders. We had 18 property managers receive their RMP® (Residential Management Professional) designation; we now have 322 RMP® designees throughout our organization. Additionally we had eight RMP®s receive their MPM® (Master Property Manager) designation. Lastly we had three companies that received their CRMC® (Certified Residential Management Company) designations. These are HUGE accomplishments and hearty congratulations to all of these individuals and companies.

This year as we work within and continue to learn our strategic plan, we must all strive to lead and serve with passion. Looking back on this year, we have found that we continue to make huge advancements in all areas. We are setting the stage for even greater growth and accomplishment for our organization. This association is at a very exciting stage, as we are ready to really take a leap forward. We are clearly following this year's theme of "Building Your Future!"

On another note, we're making several changes to the way the billing of dues is handled in 2004; they can now be paid online with a credit card. This innovation will simplify and improve our membership renewals and save our association money in the long run!

Watch for information and plan to attend NARPM's next national event, the Leadership Symposium and Winter Business Meeting to be held in Austin, TX, January 26-28, 2004. This event will be for all leaders, whether within NARPM, your own business, your community, or your family. Learn to set yourself apart from your competition.

'O au no me ka 'oia'i'o, (Sincerely Yours)



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Chris Hermanski
2003 National President

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Member Retention and Leadership Training: Possible A Mission-Impossible

by Betty Fletcher, MPM®, NARPM Membership Chair 2003

NARPM Agent, welcome to your Objective 7 briefing.

Our mission has succeeded in helping the property managers pictured here to join NARPM. They now realize and are taking advantage of the seemingly endless benefits and educational opportunities their NARPM membership offers.

We have *Found them, Invited them, Joined them, Educated them, Retained them,* and your *Chapter has Excelled!*

Your mission in Objective 7 is simply to 'Brand NARPM.' Successful completion of Objective 7 will make NARPM synonymous with expert and professional property management.

- Create a chapter logo by adding your chapter name to the NARPM logo.
- Create a chapter Web site — call HomeRentals.net, a NARPM affiliate, at 877/786-2822 for a free chapter Web site.
- Use your chapter logo and Web address on *everything* you do — business cards, yellow pages ads, classified ads, and meeting notices.
- Consider a NARPM Yellow Pages ad and list each chapter member.
- Create a NARPM group ad for the classified section of your local newspaper. Promote NARPM professionalism in your area.
- Mention NARPM when you send out press releases for your members who earn their RMP®, MPM®, or CRMC® designations.
- Send a press release when your chapter receives the annual Chapter Excellence Award, or the Chapter of the Year or New Chapter of the Year Award. Have your chapter do a community service project and mention NARPM on the literature.
- Proudly wear your NARPM shirt and carry your NARPM briefcase. Visit www.narpm.org for more NARPM products available.
- Use NARPM products as prizes for your chapter's 50/50 raffle.
- Be diligent and promote NARPM at every opportunity. You will benefit as NARPM becomes synonymous with expert and professional property management.

How do you and your chapter members 'Brand NARPM' and gain recognition for your members?



In the interest of NARPM national security this not-so-top-secret information will be presented in a series of articles. Skipping ahead is allowed on a Need-to-Know-Sooner basis. If you Need-to-Know-Sooner — your contact at Mission Control is Betty Fletcher, MPM® (a/k/a Membership Chair). You can drop her a dime at 501/907-7091 ext 101 or a line at Betty@FletcherPM.com.

Please note: The articles in this series will *not* self-destruct in 15 seconds — so keep them around for future reference! Collect them all.

And last but not least — remember the successful completion of your mission times five will reward you with **free NARPM dues** or discounted national event registration not to mention your five new NARPM friends.

Here's to your successful mission.

Mission Control,

Betty Fletcher, MPM®

Betty Fletcher, MPM®, is owner and principal broker of Fletcher Property Management, Inc., in Little Rock, AR. She is the founding president of the Central Arkansas Chapter of NARPM. On the national level, Betty serves as chair of the NARPM Membership Committee 2003.

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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome new NARPM members! The following is a list of new members who joined NARPM from August 1 to September 30, 2003.

Cindy Alexander Oak Realty Inc. PO Box 418 LaBelle, FL 33975 863/675-0500	Valerie Fleischmann A Touch of Class Property Mgmt, Inc. PO Box 3 Millersville, MD 21108 410/989-0289	Heather Kilber Presidio Property Consultants, Inc. 9320 Willowgrove Avenue, Ste. L Santee, CA 92071 619/956-0900	Joan Petruska Re/Max Alliance 4701 Columbus Street, Ste. 200 Virginia Beach, VA 23462 757/456-2345
Virgil Allgood Allgood's Property Management 2700 S Fort Hood Street, Ste. D Killeen, TX 76542 254/519-0810	Robin Frank Brown-Carrera Realty, LLC PO Box 1 Leesburg, VA 20178 703/777-0007	Kent Kuchenbecker R. Russell Properties Inc. 660 Palm Springs Drive, Ste. C Altamonte Springs, FL 32701 407/339-2233	David Reeve Coldwell Banker PPI 1400 Homestead Road Lehigh Acres, FL 33936 239/369-6161
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2003 Hawaii Convention

by Marc Banner, MPM®, 2003 Convention Chair

NOVEMBER 2003

It seems like a dream now, but just over a month ago NARPM's Annual Convention and Trade Show was held in Hawaii. What started as a far-fetched dream became reality for over 325 members and 11 vendors — an event that will go into the history books as one of the most pleasant and productive conventions ever held. The entire NARPM membership owes a big **thank you** to the dedicated members whose vision and hard work over the last several years led us to the Hawaiian paradise. An equally big **thank you** to the convention team whose diligence and expertise orchestrated a flawless convention.

"Building Your Future" was the theme, and this Convention delivered. The 15th Anniversary captured the essence of NARPM offering networking, education, certification, learning, and *fun*. This Convention had several firsts that will, I'm sure, become NARPM tradition.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday's golf tournament was the perfect kick-off to the Convention. While only 13 people participated, the word got out — this was an event not to miss. Many thanks go to Ray Scarabosio, MPM® for planning and making this event happen. I also have to congratulate Ray and his partner Chuck Goss on being the big winners. Hmm...how did that work?

PRESIDENT'S TOUR

Over 75 of our members and guests were privileged to have brunch in a vacation rental house that markets for \$1,000 per night. Situated on the ocean with a private beach, this home was fantastic (in my wildest dreams). A Hawaiian storyteller enchanted the attendees. Then the group took an excursion to the world famous Parker Ranch, at one time the largest cattle ranch in the United States. This was a fascinating look into Hawaii's history. Thanks go to Patricia Freeman and Robert Winger, MPM®, for arranging this spectacular event.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

On Wednesday the committee members conducted NARPM's business. Starting at 7 a.m., these dedicated individuals met and discussed business at hand. Keeping in mind the goals set out by the NARPM Strategic Plan-2003 and the results of the newly released marketing survey, the meetings had a new sense of direction and accomplishment.

CERTIFICATION CLASSES

Record attendance was the buzz surrounding the certification classes. Without exception the three RMP® classes and the MPM® class were bulging at the seams. Thanks go to Bill Jackson, RMP®, and the entire Education Committee for tireless efforts in making these classes successful. Also, a big thank you goes to our instructors, Fred Richter, MPM®, Jean Storms, MPM®, Suzanne Reeder, MPM®, and Peter Meer, MPM®, for their dedication to the educational experience at which NARPM excels.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Though fewer sessions this year, all were filled with valuable information and networking opportunities. Many discussions among members ensued after being exposed to this exciting information. Workshop learning sessions are the backbone of NARPM's educational experience. Thanks go to all workshop presenters that freely gave their time and expertise.



Convention Team Leaders, Melissa Prandi, MPM®, Arrangements Chair, Marc Banner, MPM®, Convention Chair, and Karen Hull, MPM®, Program Chair.

TRADE SHOW

An open-air environment that overlooked the ocean was the venue for this year's Trade Show. Eleven vendors participated, which enhanced the benefit of this convention. Thanks go to Harold Kalles, MPM®, and the entire Affiliate Committee for a spectacular job. A big thank you goes to the participating vendors: EFC Systems, Homepages.com, HomeRentals.net, LandlordSource.com, Professional Office Services of Idaho, PROMAS Landlord Software Center, Property

Automation Software, Rentclicks.com, Risco Lock Box Company, Tankless Hot Water, and Yardi Systems.

AFFILIATE OF THE YEAR

HomeRentals.net was this year's recipient of the Affiliate of the Year Award. During a general session, last year's recipient Mike McCall of PROMAS Landlord Software Center did a fantastic job presenting the award.

GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

With an emphasis toward more general sessions geared toward the "meat and potatoes" of property management, this convention hosted three nationally- and internationally-known speakers. These sessions were very well received. These speakers, Alan Cohen, Bob Walters, and John Campbell, helped put the convention experience over the top. Thanks go to Karen Hull, MPM®, and the entire Program Subcommittee. Your foresight paid off in spades.

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

There was great excitement in the air when Sherry Mastro won the Rocky Maxwell New Member Achievement Award. This is the second year that the award has been given to a new member for outstanding achievement in their first 18 months of membership. Nineteen chapters received the Chapter Excellence Award, and the Santa Clara County Chapter won the Chapter of the Year Award, the second time the Chapter has won this prestigious honor. The Membership Lunch also honored NARPM Ambassadors, those members who have referred five new members in a 12-month period, welcomed four new chapters, and witnessed the awarding of the first 15-year Anniversary pins to charter members in attendance.

DESIGNATIONS EARNED

What an exciting time to earn your designation. Congratulations to the 18 hard-working people who received their RMP® designation. Eight members went to the next step in receiving the prestigious MPM® designation. Big congratulations are extended to Prandi Property Management, Samaras and Associates, Inc., and Whisler

Land Company, for achieving the CRMC® designation, the highest designation offered by NARPM. These companies join the ranks of our true industry leaders. A thank you goes to Greg Fedro, MPM®, and the entire Certification Committee for the selfless time and effort in bringing the certification process to a whole new level.

SILENT AUCTION

New to the NARPM convention, the silent auction offered several exciting opportunities to buy goods, services, and trips. The frenzy that surrounded the auction table in the final seconds was contagious. All proceeds of the silent auction went to Habitat for Humanity Kona. NARPM is pleased to have presented \$6,360 to this worthy cause. Thanks go to Linda Holzer, RMP®, for planning this first, but not last, silent auction.

SOCIAL EVENTS

More than 450 NARPM members and guests attended the Wednesday night luau — the largest luau in hotel history. Billed as “The Best in the Islands,” every attendee came away with a smile and some great memories. The Friday Beach Party was a huge success, held on a beautiful state beach while a perfect sunset sank into the Pacific Ocean. Highlights included a great buffet-style dinner, Hawaiian storytellers, walks on the beach, 11 past presidents reminiscing about the first 15 years of NARPM, and lots of dancing. A big thank you goes to Melissa Prandi, MPM®, and the entire Arrangements Subcommittee for planning and making this special event happen.

MIKE THE “MIK-RO-WAVE”

Not able to attend this year’s convention due to a slight accident, Mike sent his best wishes. Nonetheless, in NARPM tradition, Mike was the highlight of Friday’s 50/50 raffle. The lucky winner was Linda Holzer, RMP®, who has promised a pleasant stay for Mike next year. Good luck, Mike, we’ll see you in Baltimore!

15TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The grand highlight of this convention was celebrating the first 15 years of NARPM. Each general session featured a slide show highlighting membership, certification, leadership, networking, and fun. A Trade Show booth featured artifacts and historical materials — a fascinating walk down memory lane. Many thanks go to Jean Storms, MPM®, for all her incredible efforts to make this anniversary celebration happen. She spent countless hours sorting through old photos and documentation. A special book *A Box of Chocolates for the Property Manager* was published for NARPM to commemorate this anniversary celebration. This book is wealth of information and history. Thanks goes to Karen Ebert, MPM®, for her work on producing this scrumptious morsel of NARPM memorabilia. This publication will entertain NARPM members for generations to come.

As is always a risk in saying “Thank you” in public, a few people may be forgotten; to those, and you know who you are, THANK YOU. The success of the 15th Anniversary Convention was a huge success due to your efforts.

For those who were unfortunate enough not to attend this convention, I am sorry. The benefits and the opportunity to “Build Your Future” were contained in the convention format. Make sure you plan to attend next year’s convention in Baltimore. As a political and not so subliminal message, “HAWAII IN 2008.”

Marc Banner, MPM® is the broker/president of Realty Management Associates, Inc., in Boise, ID. Marc currently serves on the NARPM National board of directors and is the 2003 Convention Committee chair. He is the founding member of the Southwest Idaho Chapter of NARPM.

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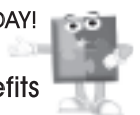
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NARPM 15th Anniversary



Chris Hermanski, MPM®, presenting the CRMC® plaque to Derren Storm and Robert Winger, MPM®, of Whisler Land Company.



Roxanne Mikolon, Linda Wix, Melissa Prandi, MPM®, Natalie Mechetti, and Christine Goodin of Prandi Property Management, receiving the CRMC® plaque from President Chris Hermanski, MPM®.



Geri Pentz receiving Samaras Associates, Inc.'s CRMC® plaque from President Chris Hermanski, MPM®.



Chris Hermanski, MPM®, presented Melissa Prandi, MPM®, with the President's Award and recognition lei.



Marc Banner, MPM®, (l) and Chris Hermanski, MPM®, (r) with representatives of Habitat for Humanity, Kona, accepting NARPM's donation of over \$6,000 from the Silent Auction.



Beverly Banner and Harold Kalles, MPM®, checking out NARPM's history at the 15th Anniversary table.



Jonathan Hartley from RentClicks.com displays the company's products at the Trade Show.



Mike Anderson, HomeRentals.net, receiving the 2003 Affiliate of the Year plaque from 2002 winner, PROMAS Landlord Software Center's representative Mike McCall.

Hawaii Convention 2003



Jean Storms, MPM®, 15th Anniversary History Chair, introducing the NARPM past presidents in the "Passing of the Gavel" ceremony.



Representative of the years. Robert Machado, MPM®, Steve Urie, MPM®, Peggy Rapp, MPM®, Jean Storms, MPM®, Rick Ebert, MPM®, Dave Holt, MPM®, Donna Brandsey, RMP®, Andrea Caldwell, MPM®, Karen Ebert, MPM®, Ray Scarabosio, MPM®, Chris Hermanski, MPM®, Sylvia Hill, MPM®, Mike Mengden, MPM®, Denny Snowdon, MPM®, and Melissa Prandi, MPM®, after the NARPM-through-fifteen-years "Passing of the Gavel" ceremony.



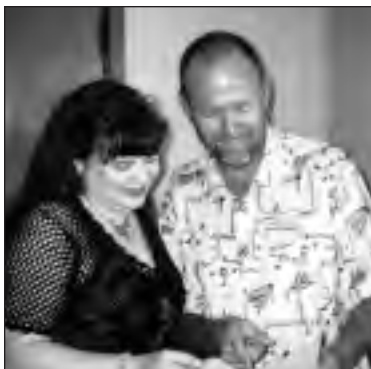
President-elect Andrea Caldwell, MPM®, making her incoming President's speech at the Friday Night Beach Party.



Chapter of the Year members Gil Hill, Sylvia Hill, MPM®, Andrea Caldwell, MPM®, Arlene Lopes, RMP®, Troy Hill, Kathryn Pelling, RMP®, Barbara Campbell, RMP®, John Dovano, and Louis Melo of the Santa Clara Chapter.



Betty Fletcher, MPM®, presenting Sherry Mastro with the 2003 Rocky Maxwell New Member Achievement Award.



Emcee Erika Green, MPM®, and Convention Chair Marc Banner, MPM®, conferring on a last-minute change in the schedule.



Betsy Rose, better known as Rose Thomas, MPM®, promoting the 2004 NARPM Annual Convention in Baltimore.



A picture is worth a 1,000 words.

I Am MPM® 100

James Emory Tungsvik, MPM®

This past September at the Annual Convention, I became MPM® #100. I didn't think about the significance of it until convention came closer; not until one of my best NARPM chums, April Sanders, MPM®, gave me grief because she wanted to be 100. I had to stop for a moment and think about all that being "MPM® 100" means.

- It means I have climbed another rung in my ongoing personal pursuit to be the best I can be as a property manager.
- It means that I am following 99 other fellow NARPM members down a path of enrichment, that for me, has not only propelled my professional career, but my personal life.
- It means that I believe that I have now gone from good to great and toward a future that will spell s-u-c-c-e-s-s.
- It showed me that NARPM truly is a place for any property manager to belong, learn, and reach new heights.
- It made me focus on past achievements and look forward with confidence to new challenges.

I can tell you from experience that it is not easy to earn a designation. It does require planning, time, and money to achieve this. However, I can also tell you that you will grow vastly in your knowledge of property management through education, training, and learning opportunities.

I challenge each of you who are thinking about obtaining your designation. Don't wait to take that first step. Apply *now!* There are 99 of my new best friends and myself waiting on the other side to help you make your goal a reality.

James Emory Tungsvik, MPM®, has worked on many committees at both the National and State level. He works for Around the Clock Management, Inc., CRMC®.

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PLATINUM MEMBER

Affiliate of the Year 2002

CERTIFICATION CORNER

by Greg A. Fedro, MPM®, NARPM Certification Chair 2003

The Certification Committee is pleased to announce the following new candidates. Good luck!

RMP® CANDIDATES

Richard Vieira, Hawaii Reserves, Inc., Laie, HI

Christopher Shultz, Alpha Omega Homes/Metroplex Homes, Weatherford, TX

Genie Gilliam, Practical & Professional Property Management, Brookings, OR

Gary Walker, Aborn Property Management, San Jose, CA

Valerie Fleischmann, A Touch of Class Property Management, Inc., Millersville, MD

Phillip Fleischmann, A Touch of Class Property Management, Inc., Millersville, MD

MPM CANDIDATES

W. Terrence Hull, Sr., RMP®, Property Management Experts, San Jose, CA

Michael Francis, RMP®, Rollingwood Management, Inc., Austin, TX

Letters From Members

ALOHA EVERYONE!

As a new member of NARPM and upon attending my first convention (which happened to be the 15th national convention here in Hawaii!), I felt like "a kid in a candy store," amazed by the events and wonderful people I encountered. Not only was everyone I met so friendly, but I found out I am not alone in the harried life of a property manager.

As I was sitting there listening to the glowing memorial of Mr. Rocky Maxwell and his outstanding services to NARPM presented by Ray Scarabosio, MPM®, our local chapter President Linny Vermeire leaned over and whispered "We nominated you for that." At first, I was totally unaware of the implication she had made, but then listening to Ray read the letter she had written, it all hit me at once. When Linny turned to me with tears in her eyes and said, "I wrote that," I became completely overwhelmed. All I could do was sit there in shock listening to the incredibly dear things she and our other Big Island members had to say about me, a truly humbling experience.

As I made my way to the front of the room to accept the Rocky Maxwell Memorial Award, I was dazed and in complete emotional euphoria. Through the tears and pride in my heart, I could not speak except to say "Thank you" and to hug all those past presidents on stage.

It is still hard to write this without a lot of emotions surfacing, but I do want to say with all my heart, Mahalo nui loa to the Big Island NARPM Chapter for even thinking of nominating me for this most prestigious award, and to actually receive it, is such a great honor and an experience of a lifetime that will stay with pride in my heart for the rest of my life.

With warmest Aloha,
Sherry Mastro, Century 21 All Islands
Kailua-Kona, HI
Vice President Big Island Chapter

A PERSONAL THANK YOU

My name is Diane Quigley. I am with the Northern Colorado Chapter of NARPM. I went to the 15th Annual Convention in Hawaii this past September. It was the first time I have ever been to Hawaii and the first time at an Annual Convention, so I was very excited.

My husband and I flew in on Sunday, September 14 and I ended up having emergency surgery on September 15. I had to stay in the hospital until Wednesday September 17. (I'm fine now.)

Someone who went to the convention heard about my unfortunate situation and sent a beautiful flower arrangement to me in my room at the hotel. It didn't have a card, and the hotel didn't have any information.

So if you are reading this article, (whoever you are), I just want to thank you so very much. It made my husband and I feel wonderful.

I also want to thank everyone who sent me cards when I got home.

This is just another reason we all belong to this great organization.

Thank you again,
Diane Quigley, Property Technica, Inc.
Greeley, CO
Northern Colorado Chapter

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First American Registry, Inc.

For more affiliate information, please visit the NARPM Web site
www.narpm.org.

Mark Your Calendar!

SECOND ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM AND WINTER BUSINESS MEETING:

Monday, January 26 – Wednesday, January 28, 2004
Austin Marriott at the Capitol
701 East 11th Street • Austin, TX

The Ins and Outs of Today's Search Engines

by Mike Anderson, HomeRentals.net

Search engines seem to be the fastest changing entity on the Web these days. Since we're all concerned about getting our Web sites found, it's important to understand the tricks to high search engine rankings. There's not much to understand though — there aren't really any tricks to high rankings in today's modern search engines.

In the days of yore, experts figured out hundreds of ways to trick search engines — keywords, mirrored gateway pages, search engine bait, and more. Every Web guy seemed to have a new trick for getting high listings in search engines, and many of the tricks worked.

However, those were the days when there were hundreds of big search engines, and they weren't even sure what they were doing. Remember the old mainstay search engines: Infoseek, Go, HotBot, and Snap? Those companies are essentially gone, either defunct or swallowed up by someone who was not interested in their former functionality. We're in a different era of search engines now, and different rules apply. Today's search engines are mature — they've learned and grown as the Web has grown and more effectively search the millions of Web pages on the Internet.

The key to a high-quality search engine is honest, real results. Nobody who searches the Web wants to find the trickiest sites; they want to find the sites that most closely match what they're searching for. This requires modern search engines to weed out the trickery and provide a better way to give its searchers real results.

So what is important to today's search engines, like Google, MSN, and Yahoo!? While each keeps its propriety-indexing algorithm more tightly guarded than the Colonel's secret recipe, the basics are published, common knowledge.

Here's a synopsis of what's hot and what's not in the major search engines.

OUT — META TAGS

The concept of Meta keyword and description Meta tags was beautiful — give the site owner a few lines to describe what his site is about, and what words should pull up that site in a search. In a world of honest people, this would have been wonderful. However, it did not take long for search engines to realize the abuse of this system. If you're selling widgets, but everybody on the Internet is looking for Britney Spears, why not add her name to your Meta tags so more people see your site? How about if you have a competitor that does massive advertising — why not put their name in your keywords so that somebody looking for them has a chance of finding you instead? This abuse led all but a few search engines to completely eliminate their indexing of Meta tags.



IN — CONTENT KEYWORDS

The top search engines now index the actual content of your Web site, rather than hidden tags. This makes it very important to have strategic keywords in the content of your main page. Don't try to trick the search engines, though! They know if your content makes sense or repeats words excessively and will block you. When creating your main page text, develop two or three concise paragraphs that will help Web site visitors understand what you are all about. This will give the same message to the search engines. Be sure to include phrases that people are likely to search for when looking for a Web site like yours.

OUT — DOORWAY/GATEWAY PAGES

Another cute trick in the olden days was to have numerous pages, all with different Meta tags and content, connect to the same site. The prevailing logic was that you would be better off if a search engine found you five times instead of one. At the very least, you could tailor each doorway page to a specific search engine, thus increasing that page's ranking in that search engine. Again, the search engines have caught on to this trick. Not only is this often a useless technique, but if it's blatantly obvious, it can get you penalized.

IN — ENTRY PAGE INTEGRITY

Today's search engine algorithms look for a concept called "integrity." Does the title match up with the site? Does the text flow in natural language? Is there an obvious relationship between the domain name and title and the purpose of the site? Do all the pages in a site seem to relate to the main page? All these factors comprise page integrity. While no search engine is going to release the exact weight of the factors that contribute to a high integrity rating, all agree that these factors are vital.

OUT — CONSTANT SUBMISSIONS

It used to be that you had to repetitiously submit a Web site to search engines to keep your listing alive. This came from the early days of the Web, when new Web sites were springing up every nanosecond and first-generation spidering technology could not keep up. Many search engines would sit back and wait for you to tell them you were out there, then they would take a look at you. With improved spidering technologies, once a search engine knows you exist, they will periodically revisit your site to keep it fresh. Too many submissions can now cause certain search engines to blacklist your site.

IN — LONGEVITY AND HISTORY

A Web site that's been around a long time is assumed to be more valuable than a brand new one. Obviously, for any Web site that's survived the last couple of years on the Internet, this is true! In reali-

ty, some great Web sites do pop up now and then, but the search engines still want to let them simmer for a while before giving them the top rankings.

OUT — CONSTANT MAIN PAGE CHANGES

In the days of yore, it was common to make a change to your Web site, submit it to search engines, wait for it to be indexed, analyze the results, and repeat. With enough tweaking, over a long enough time, you could drive your site up to the top 20 or top 10. In those days, most search engines deleted your site and replaced it with the new site every time they re-indexed. Today's search engines keep a log of your site, and every time it changes, they still keep the old site in the back of their minds. Frequent changes can no longer be analyzed for improvement, as there are so many more factors in search engine positioning. Additionally, it can drive down your history points and even land you on the blacklist, if you over-do it!

IN — RELEVANCE AND LINKS IN

The two biggest factors behind content and integrity are relevance and links in. Relevance points are accrued when someone finds your site, visits it, and stays there. For example, let's say that someone did a search for Lake Oswego property management. A list of 10 sites comes up, and yours is among them. If the searcher chooses to click on your site, and then stays there to read about you, you are given relevance points for the search term "Lake Oswego property management." Your site was obviously relevant to the term, as someone looking for that term found you and liked you!

A links in score comes from the number of recognized sites that link to yours. It is assumed that if a lot of Web sites link to your site, your

site has something worthwhile on it. Do not call up all your friends and ask them to link to you, though. Most of the points are accrued when a big-name reputable company links to your site. One of the things you can do to increase links in is to make sure you are included in significant Web directories that contain a live link to your site.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Search engine technology is constantly evolving to give us a more accurate list of what we want. In a perfect search engine world, your site will come up exactly where it belongs. The most useful site for property management in Atlanta, for example, will come up #1 on a search for Atlanta property management. We have not quite arrived in the perfect search engine world yet, so there is still some optimization and search strategy beyond just having a good site. However, you will be much better off by focusing on developing a good, useful, clean, clear site, and making your search engine strategy secondary. If you are not sure how to do this, an experienced professional is worth their weight in gold.

As you consider search engines, realize that only 7% of a Web site's visits come from search engines, and that number drops every year. People are much more likely to visit your Web site based on a yard sign, a business card, a voice mail message, or a Yellow Pages ad. Make sure you are listed in professional online directories as well — a site like narpm.org will draw more traffic than your own Web site. As a NARPM member, you are listed there. Capitalize on all your available options for maximum site exposure.

Mike Anderson of HomeRentals.net prepares this column. If you have a question you would like answered, e-mail him at mike@homerentals.net.



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An Easy Way to Deal with E-mail Viruses and Worms

by Heather Dickson

If you feel intimidated when someone tries to teach you something new on the computer, this article is for you!

In the course of my career, I have worked with many people who I knew were smart but were convinced that they could not learn how to do new things on a computer. At some point, they would convince themselves that they were not one of those "computer people." I would try to teach them how to do something that would make their work a lot easier or faster, and I could see them shut down immediately. "I cannot do stuff like that. I am just not good at it."

In a few cases, my colleagues were simply amazed that I knew how to do things like upload photos to the Internet or how to start a new folder in Windows. Some would tell me that I must have some special gift for technology. I would just laugh and tell them that nothing could be further from the truth! I have a degree in psychology. I am not a math and science type of person, and if it were not for the patience of my tech-minded husband and friends, I never would have learned how to do these things.

The fact is, computers are such a part of our lives, that you cannot afford to think of yourself as anything but a "computer person." The reason I think a lot of people are intimidated when learning about computers is that so much of the instructions and directions are full of jargon and assume that people have as much technological knowledge as people who work with computers for a living.

I am convinced that if I can do it, anyone else can do it too. All it takes is an open mind, confidence, and someone to explain things to you step-by-step in plain English.

Aside from using anti-virus software, there is another way to keep some e-mail viruses or worms from driving you crazy and clogging up your inbox. While the "Sobig" virus seems to have died down, there are sure to be some like it in the future. If you would like to prevent

these bogus e-mails from reaching your inbox, you can set up rules in Outlook or Outlook Express to send them directly to the delete folder.

Although the Sobig virus seems to be under control, it might be good practice to do this now. That way when the next big virus comes around, you will be able to filter it out right away. It might seem like it is difficult, but I know that anyone can do this. If you are smart enough to do your taxes and balance your checkbook, you can do this...trust me.

If you are using Outlook Express, go to Tools, then select "Message Rules" and then "Mail." A box will pop up with buttons on the right side of the window. Hit the "New" button. Another box pops up with three windows. In the first box, click the box next to "Where the subject line contains specific words."

In the second box, click "Delete it." Now in the third box it should say, "Apply this rule after the message arrives/ Where the Subject line contains specific words/ Delete it." Click on the words "Contains specific words."

This is where you tell the program what words to look for in the subject line. It is very important to remember that this is case sensitive, meaning that if you put "abc" in, it will only delete e-mails with "abc" in the subject, and not "ABC" or "Abc." For the Sobig virus, there were seven subject lines that were commonly used. If you would like to read more about this, go to <http://www.webpro.com/iq/SobigE.asp>.

The subject lines are

- That movie,
- Wicked screensaver,
- Your application,
- Approved,
- My details,
- Details,
- Your details, and
- Thank you.

Enter the first phrase into the box and then click on the "Add" button to the right. That phrase will appear in the box below. You can add as many phrases as you would like, clicking "Add" after each one. When you are done, hit "OK," then hit "OK" again.

At this point, we are back to one box open with buttons on the right. Be sure to click the "apply now" button if you want the rule to apply to the e-mail that is already in your inbox as well as any future e-mails.

When you are done with that, click the "OK" button and you are finished.

IF YOU USE OUTLOOK, THE PROCESS IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT

First go to Tools, and then choose "Rules Wizard." Click on the "New" button on the right. It should say at the top of a new box

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"What type of rule would you like to create?" There will be a list of types of rules: you want to choose "Check messages when they arrive," which is at the top so it should already be highlighted. Simply click on "Next."

The next box asks you "Which conditions do you want to check?" with a list of choices, each with an empty box next to it. Scroll down until you get to "With specific words in the subject," and click the box in front of it.

Once you click it, you will notice that "With specific words in the subject" appears in the box below. Click on the "Specific Words" in the lower box here to specify which words the program should look for.

This is where you tell the program what words to look for in the subject line. It is very important to remember that this is case sensitive, meaning that if you put "abc" in, it will only delete e-mails with "abc" in the subject, and not "ABC" or "Abc."

For the Sobig virus, there were seven subject lines that were commonly used. If you would like to read more about this, go to <http://www.webpro.com/iq/SobigE.asp>.

A new box will pop up that says, "Search Text" at the top. Enter one of the phrases you want to filter out and click "Add." You may enter as many phrases as you would like, clicking "Add" after each one. When you are finished, click "OK." You will be taken back to the previous box. Click "Next" at the bottom.

At this point, you have two choices. You can either specify that these e-mails go into your delete file to be reviewed later, or you can specify that they be permanently deleted from Outlook so that you never see them. At this point, either click in the box next to "Delete It," which simply moves it automatically to the delete folder, or click "Permanently Delete," which means that you will never see the e-mail at all and will not be able to get it back.

Click "Next" again and you are now at the exceptions box. I can see no reason to use the exceptions when dealing with the Sobig viruses and others like it. There might be a temptation to make an exception for people who are in your address book or close friends. But remember, a virus will take over someone else's address book and send you e-mails without the person ever knowing. Anyone in your address book could send you an infected e-mail without knowing it.

I recommend that you hit "Next" without selecting any exceptions at this point.

In the next box, the program would like to know the name of the rule you have just created. You might want to call it "Viruses #1" or something similar. Click finish after naming your rule. At this point you have another choice: you can apply the rule you just created to the mail already in your inbox, or you can choose to have it apply only to the incoming mail from this point forward. Choose either "Run Now" or "OK."

You are finished. That was not so hard, was it? You might even want to set up some more rules to help you organize your inbox or to filter out spam or unwanted e-mail.

SOME MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ATTACHMENTS AND VIRUSES/WORMS

E-mail viruses and worms almost always are transmitted through attachments. Remember after the Anthrax scare in the United States a couple of years ago when everyone was very picky about what

mail they accepted and opened? Anything that looked suspicious or did not have a return address was not opened.

Think about attachments in the same way. If you get e-mail from an unknown source, do not open the attachment unless it is personally addressed to you. You can always send an e-mail back to that person asking them about who they are or what the attachment is for if you are in doubt.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPAM AND VIRUSES

Recently online, I have seen a couple of people referring to viruses as spam. If you want to impress your friends and coworkers with your technological savvy, you need to know that spam is unwanted and unsolicited e-mail you get for a commercial purpose. Someone wants you to buy something, be a part of their program, or visit their Web site.

E-mail you get because of viruses is technically not spam. Although it is unwanted, its intention is not to advertise or market anything, it is simply a nuisance created by someone with too much time on his or her hands!

Also keep in mind that viruses commonly get into people's address books and send out automatic e-mail to everyone on the list. Your friends and relatives are not sending you infected e-mail on purpose.

Heather Dickson is the owner of Virtuassist.net, a virtual assistant practice. She is a member of the International Virtual Assistants Association and a Certified Real Estate Support Specialist. Heather lives in Missouri with her husband and four cats. heather@virtuassist.net

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Attention All NARPM Members!

NARPM is happy to announce Online Dues Renewal. Now you can pay your NARPM annual dues with a click of a button (and a credit card)! You should have received an e-mail with your user name (last name) and password (member ID #).

How Do I Do This?

Type 209.25.133.249/narpmrenewal.asp into the address line of your Web browser. Once you have logged in, just follow the simple instructions to update your information (if needed) and pay your dues and e-mail and/or Web site links (if applicable) using any major credit card. Paper invoices were not mailed unless your membership record did not include an e-mail address.

Property Management Superstar

Continued from page 14

- Does this resume include any information regarding ongoing training and/or certifications?
- Does this resume include any information about professional and/or industry affiliations?
- Does this resume have any spelling or grammatical errors?

Tip From The Coach: In addition to the questions above, ask yourself the following questions while reviewing each resume: Does this person have experience working with consumers? Does this person have a sales/service background? Does this person have experience developing relationships?

CONDUCTING A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Select the best candidates from the resumes you have been sent and schedule a 10-minute telephone interview with each person. During each call, ask the following questions: "Are you currently employed? Why are you leaving your current employer? What is the ideal position you are looking for? Why should you be the person selected for this position? What are you currently earning?" Take written notes during each phone call and listen carefully to this person's telephone voice, their attitude, and how close their ideal position matches the

position you have advertised. Financially, your advertised position should be within 15%-20% of this person's current income. Lastly, give each person homework or research to complete prior to their first interview with your property management company.

Want to hear more about this important topic or ask some additional questions about how to read a resume? Would you like to see a sample of a world-class resume? Fax a note on your letterhead to 435/615-8670, or send an e-mail to ernest@powerhour.com and The Coach will fax/e-mail you a free TeleForum invitation.

Ernest F. Oriente, The Coach, is the founder of PowerHour® a professional business coaching/recruiting service and the author of SmartMatch Alliances™. He has spent 14,400 hours [since 1988] delivering customized training by telephone in leadership, traditional/Internet marketing and sales for property management companies, apartment locator/corporate housing services, and multihousing sales/service companies worldwide. PowerHour® is based in Olympic-town (Park City, UT), and can be reached at 435/615-8486 or by e-mail at ernest@powerhour.com. Or visit their TeleForum Web site: www.powerhour.com. To receive a FREE property management success newsletter, send an e-mail to: ernest@powerhour.com.



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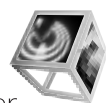
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- Maintain Property Lists
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- Multiple Limit Screens & Warnings
- Automatic Posting of Late Fees
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Getting Your Employees' Attention Back to Work

by Michael Christian

It is 9:00 a.m. on a Monday morning. Do you know where your employee's attention is? Is it on work?

Picture this. You are at work. The phone rings. It is your aging father's neighbor calling to say that Dad is walking around outside in his pajamas and seems confused. You have a full day of meetings and deadlines. Your heart sinks as you try to figure out how to care for your dad and keep your job.

The phone rings again. This time it is the school nurse saying that your asthmatic child is having trouble breathing.

According to the American Productivity Audit, one-third of respondents said dependent health concerns were a top reason employees were not able to focus on their job while at work.

What you may not know is that the situations above can just as likely happen to a working woman as to a working man. However if a woman gets the troubling phone call, she is more likely to talk about it at work while the man will not (2003 National Alliance for Caregiving national survey).

Millions of working adults — men and women — are juggling the competing demands of caring for a chronically ill or disabled parent, raising a family, and managing a career.

Working caregivers sacrifice leisure time, and often suffer stress-related illnesses. Negative effects on working caregivers include time lost from work, lower productivity, quitting a job to provide care, lost career opportunities, and lower future earnings. Eventually, some 16% quit their jobs to provide care full-time. Work disruptions due to employee caregiving responsibilities result in productivity losses of \$1,142 per year per employee. According to the *Washington Post*, researchers estimate that the cost of informal caregiving in terms of lost productivity to U.S. businesses is \$29 billion annually.

CAREGIVING TAKES WORK-LIFE TOLL

A recent MetLife study dubbed "Juggling Act" revealed some of the productivity-killing adjustments that caregivers choose to make to their work schedules:

- 84% make phone calls;
- 69% arrive late or leave early;
- 67% take time off during the workday; and
- 29% make up work at another time

In addition, a national survey conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving in 1997 found that two in 10 working caregivers turned down the opportunity to work on special projects; almost as many avoided work-related travel. Forty percent of the survey respondents said that caregiving affected their ability to advance in their jobs.

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO

Here are seven measures you can take to reduce employee stress, increase productivity, and decrease lost work time due to employee caregiving responsibilities.

1. Offer "cafeteria style" employee benefits, which allow employees to select supplemental dependent care coverage to reimburse costs for in-home care or adult day care. Benefits also should cover therapeutic counseling for employees to help cope with the stresses of caregiving.
2. Provide information on helpful Internet sites or resource centers.
3. Organize in-house caregiver support groups or coordinate with local community groups or hospitals so that employees can attend an outside support group.
4. One of the most critical benefits for an employee with caregiving responsibilities is time. Flexible work hours, family illness days, and leave time are key. Data from the Bureau of National Affairs (1993) found that flexible scheduling improved job performance, decreased lateness and employee turnover, and increased job satisfaction.
5. Companies with 50 or more employees must comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a seriously ill parent, spouse, or child, while protecting job security. Smaller firms can use the FMLA guidelines to provide support for individual employees.
6. Hold a company "caregiver fair" or a series of lunchtime seminars on issues such as healthcare planning before a crisis hits or coping skills for caregivers.
7. Offer private long-term care insurance coverage for employees, their spouses, and dependents.

Employers have a stake in designing responsive and effective programs to support their caregiving employees. Research has demonstrated that the cost to employers of lost productivity and other factors related to caregiving employees' difficulty in balancing work and family is high. Taking action immediately starts to increase productivity, lessen direct and indirect financial costs, and enhance employer/employee work/life relationship — which directly impacts on employee morale, satisfaction and retention.

Michael Christian is president of Patient Advocate Solutions (PAS). PAS provides healthcare navigation and insurance resolution for consumers, employers and healthcare providers. Contact him at 732/564-9800 or www.pas-now.com.

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Ambassador Program

August/September 2003 New Members

New Member

Jacqueline McKnight
Patricia Wade
William Singh
Mavis Ivene
Shannon Westfall
Fred Slatter
Julie Sherrill
Tina Bradley
Brian Kiernan
Martin Sheftel
Ruth Dailey
Beverly Young
Linda Skinner
Kent Kuchenbecker
Barbara Mayo
Joseph Pedeferra
Angela Salemi
Tracey Naumann
Clay Selland
Virgil Allgood
Violeta Bussell
Donna Edwards
Felix Galvez
Dora Morton
Amanda Welch
Kay Schomp
Gay Smith
Nila Bieker
Jerry Papineau
Cindy Alexander
Linda Harris
Janet Whittle
Dawn Crawford
Gary Crawford
George Trombley
Rita Gaboury
Janet Panzer
Bart Hope
Debbie Jackson
Joan Petruska

Ambassador Member

Dominique Higa
Dominique Higa
Robert Basso
Mary Love, RMP®
Rick L. Newman, Jr.
Tina M. Bradley
Jim Hodge
Chuck Warren
Sandy Clark
Chantal Davis
Brenda F. Gerdes, RMP®
Roy Poe
Jim Waddell, RMP®
Cindi Shaffer
Harry A. Heist
Linny Vermeire
Beverly Browning, MPM®, CPM®
Tina M. Bradley
Mike Carlson, MPM®
Kathy L. Brinkley
Kathy L. Brinkley
Kathy L. Brinkley
Kathy L. Brinkley
Kathy L. Brinkley
Kathy L. Brinkley
Raye Mayhorn
Raye Mayhorn
Jill Childs-Mynarcik
Suzanne Reeder, MPM®
Michael McVety
Elizabeth Morgan, MPM®
E. Mahlon Whittle
Tina M. Bradley
Tina M. Bradley
Jill Childs-Mynarcik
Jill J. Boles, RMP®
Joel Panzer, MPM®
Tina M. Bradley
Pamela Foster
Chuck Warren

Ambassador Update!

Forty new members were added to the NARPM ranks in August and September through the Ambassador Program. That was 71% of the total of 48 professional members and eight support staff members who joined those months. Kathy Brinkley has earned her Ambassador Certificate with six new members in one month!

You can now check the status of your referral points in the Members Only section at www.narpm.org. Please remember that all five referrals must be within 12 months of the first member referred. Thank you all for your tremendous support of the Ambassador Program.



Ambassador Program

The Ambassador Program was designed a few years ago to reward our current members for referring new members to our organization. Who better to spread the word of the benefits of NARPM than its members? If you refer five new members in one year, you will receive an award certificate that may be used toward your next year's dues or for events for the coming year. When you achieve ambassador status and receive your \$195 NARPM credit, it can be used toward your annual dues or registration at a NARPM National Convention. It's flexible! Just follow the simple steps outlined here:

- ★ Call NARPM Headquarters at 800/782-3452, and request membership application forms. Headquarters, upon request, will mail the application directly to the prospective member but will not fill in the "referred by" line.
- ★ The 12-month membership period for the five new members starts the day your first new membership application is approved by headquarters.
- ★ When Headquarters receives the fifth new membership, an Award Certificate will be issued and dated. A recognition certificate will also be issued, and you, as the "Ambassador," will be recognized in the *Residential Resource*.
- ★ The Award Certificate can be used to pay NARPM annual dues, or like amount can be applied toward National Convention.
- ★ It must be used in full at the time of use and attached to your dues or registration for Convention. The value of the Award Certificate is equal to what the national dues were at the time the Award Certificate was issued. It also must be used within 12 months of the issue date.
- ★ A member can earn more than one Award Certificate per 12-month period.

2004 RMP®/MPM® Certification Classes

Date	Location	Class	Instructor
January 26	Austin, TX	RMP® Marketing	Raymond Scarabosio, MPM®
January 25-26	Austin, TX	MPM® Operating a Maintenance Company	Kit Garren, MPM®
February 19	Denver, CO	RMP® Operations	Peter Meer, MPM®
February 18-19	Denver, CO	MPM® Owner/Client Relations	Wallace Gibson, MPM®
April 23	Fredericksburg, VA	RMP® Applying Technology to Property Management	Wallace Gibson, MPM®

Interested in Sponsoring Certification Classes?

Opportunities are available to chapters that would like to further member education, promote certification, and increase their chapter funds by sponsoring a certification class. However, it takes time to plan a class — so give your chapter five to six month's lead-time if you wish to sponsor one of these events.

Find out more by calling Bill Jackson, RMP®, at 425/467-7785 or e-mailing bill@protocolpropertymgmt.com. Bill can provide you with the details you need to make a Certification class a successful venture.

To register for classes, complete the registration form and mail or fax with payment to NARPM Headquarters. For more information call Headquarters at 800/782-3452.

RMP®/MPM® Class Registration

FEES	Early Registration*	Registration*
RMP® Classes		
Member	\$195	\$225
Nonmember	\$250	\$280
Retake	\$100	\$130
MPM® Classes		
Member	\$395	\$450
Nonmember	\$450	\$505
Retake	\$300	\$355

* To receive the early registration price payment must be postmarked, faxed, or e-mailed 30 days prior to the class.

CLASS INFORMATION

- On-site registration begins at 8:00 a.m. Class hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- RMP® classes qualify for 6 hours of NARPM certification.
- MPM® classes qualify for 12 hours of NARPM certification.
- All materials will be given to students on the day of the class.
- All attendees are required to make their individual hotel reservations.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations must be received in writing. If cancellation notice is received at least 30 days prior to the class, a full refund will be issued less a \$25 processing fee. If cancellation notice is received less than 30 days before the class, a 50% refund will be issued. No refunds will be made on the day of class; however, the registration fee can be applied to a later class with a \$25 transfer fee.

Due to low registration, a class may be cancelled with 15 days prior notice. Registration fee would be credited to a future class.

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Two Easy Ways to Register

1. MAIL your form with payment to NARPM, P.O. Box 140647, Austin, TX 78714-0647.

2. FAX your form with credit card payment to 512/454-3036. Please do not mail the original.



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Tenant Appreciation Course

by Robert L. Cain, Copyright 2000 Cain Publications, Inc.

Good tenants are a treasure. Any other kind of treasure you would guard, protect, and cherish. But too many times as landlords, we forget about our treasured customers who pay their rent on time, never cause a disturbance, take care of their homes, and are good neighbors.

The fact is, 95% of tenants are good. We want them to continue making their homes with us. Here are four ways to help show them that you are just about the best landlord there is.

1. Always do what you say you will do.

Just as important, never promise something you can't do. For example, a tenant complains about noise or inappropriate behavior from another of your tenants. Tell the complaining tenant, "I'll look into it and get back to you. If you haven't heard from me in two or three days, call me." Never under any circumstances promise to fix the problem or to do something specific by a certain time; you haven't gotten the other tenant's side of the story.

Investigate the problem and call the complaining tenant with a summary of your findings and what you are doing to correct the problem.

If you promise to deal with the situation by a certain date and time, you had better be right on time or the tenant will remember only that you didn't do what you said you would.

2. Survey tenants for unfulfilled expectations, then fill them. Find out if there is anything they had expected that they are not getting from their home. Suppose with the noisy neighbors your tenant never called you. He just seethed quietly in a dark corner of his apartment, thinking about moving. He'd even started checking the newspaper to see what was available. Then he gets a survey form from you wanting to know how things are in his home. Does he ever let you know?

It is impossible to know all the reasons tenants do not call you to complain. So you have to give them the opportunity to tell you what's on their minds. Now go back to number one.

3. Do something to reward good tenants. It may not be much, but it could mean a lot. A thank you note for being such a good resident goes a long way. Too many times people say to themselves, "I always pay my rent on time and am careful not to bother anybody, but nobody appreciates me."

If you don't feel as if a thank you note is enough, send flowers, a box of candy, or a bottle of champagne.

4. Don't trade off bad service or conditions for lower rent. Paint is peeling, all kinds of things need repair—none of them serious, but it looks shabby. Good tenants do not think about the rent being low, only that the place does not look very good. They might even think the rent is too high for a "dump like this." Lower rents won't get good tenants to trade off for unsatisfactory conditions, only bad tenants.

Keeping good tenants means keeping your eye on the customer service ball. Never miss an opportunity to do the little things and the big things to provide top-notch service to your tenants. Then you can look forward to having your good tenants stay with you a long time and thank you for being their landlord.

Robert Cain is a nationally-recognized speaker and writer on property management and real estate issues. For a free sample copy of the Rental Property Reporter call 800/654-5456 or visit their Web site at www.rentalprop.com. Copyright 2000 Cain Publications, Inc., used by permission.