

## Great Management Starts With A Bid

Managing a community association is no easy task. Building a community is an even greater task. That's why it's essential to align your community at the earliest stages of development with a professional community management company that can help you develop a singular vision for your new community.

Trying to figure out which community management company is professional enough is difficult. Interviewing those companies can be one of the toughest jobs a developer, or the board of directors they set up, will face. After all, most boards are comprised of people from all walks of life, and they may or may not have relevant experience when it comes to soliciting bids or conducting interviews with management companies.

Here are a few helpful tips to guide your community in choosing the ideal association management company:

- **Create an RFP:** This will help you to work out ahead of time just what is going to be expected from the manager and management firm.
- **Pre-screen:** Contact your local chapter of the Community Associations Institute (CAI) ([www.caionline.org](http://www.caionline.org)) to find reputable management companies in your area.
- **Understand:** Community management is a specific industry with significant laws and requirements. Professionals in the industry are few and far between and you want both experience and knowledge to help you avoid the pitfalls of managing an association.
- **Allow ample time:** Make sure that the companies you meet with have enough time to make their presentations. Allow at least an hour for each.
- **Be frank:** Let the interviewee know what's going on in your development that might have an impact on how your community is managed, and determine if they have the right experience to fit the type, style and operational complexities of your community.
- **Ask about insurance:** Management companies should carry enough errors and omissions, liability, and fidelity bond insurance to assure you that there is sufficient coverage for an error or omission that may occur.
- **Check references:** Be sure to call around and find out if the company's references are favorable, and ask questions about topics that are important to you.
- **Check licenses and certifications:** Make sure that any prospective management company's licenses are up-to-date, and that claimed professional certifications are still in force.
- **Look at more than cost:** Cheapest is not always the best! Consider cost-savings or buying programs, or the relationships that well-established companies may have.
- **Provide feedback:** Call or write with a thank-you, and let them know your final decision. Your feedback will help them learn and provide a better bid for your business the next time around.