

Manager's Perspective...

How to Get Community Business Done Faster and Easier

Article I

By Russell Munz

This article is the first of a seven part series on how your community can accomplish more this year. After working with numerous associations, our firm has seen a pattern of behaviors and processes that can be improved in order to increase the efficiency of running a community. In this introductory article I will lay out six strategies that community leaders can use to improve how they do business. In each issue the articles will discuss one of the strategies separately in greater detail. The six strategies are: 1) how a board spends its time and how to determine what to focus on; 2) volunteerism, delegation and committees, how to get the community involved; 3) reduce time spent on emergencies, become proactive rather than reactive; 4) reduce the time spent on low value tasks to maximize the benefit of your volunteer time; 5) don't reinvent the wheel, seek advisors who have been there already; 6) outsourcing and consultants aren't just for businesses anymore.

Most communities in Connecticut were built in the early 1980's. Twenty years later most of the community's infrastructure is beyond its useful life. Operating the older community presents new and unique challenges that boards, a few years ago, did not have to deal with when the community was younger. What does this mean to the community?

- New and unique problems take longer to solve than problems that you have dealt with before.
- Complicated and often technical problems are more difficult to "get your arms

around". The amount of the information and all of the details take more time to analyze in order to come up with a solution to the problems.

If you must spend time on studying and solving new problems and you have to continue to do the usual tasks of operating your community with only so much time to volunteer, where do you get more time?

1. **Take time from other areas of your life** to feed the condo time monster? Sleep less, cut back on family, friends and hobbies? Or like some volunteers you can consider these condo challenges fun projects that you willingly want to spend time on, however for the majority of volunteers you will continue to have a set number of hours that can be donated to the community.
2. **You can use your current volunteer time more effectively.** But first you have to recognize which tasks you currently spend your volunteer hours on and see if you can use those hours more efficiently, and free up some time.
3. You can add more volunteer hours by **asking others to contribute time.**
4. If volunteers are not available, you can **get help by paying for services** to do some of the things the board currently does, freeing up time for the board to focus on bigger issues.
5. Additionally, rather than spending time researching projects and inventing solutions, you can **hire advisors to help with**

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The best way to approach the "to do list" and get things done is by working down the list one item at a time. The new board motto can be taken from the movie *The Karate Kid*: "focus energy Daniel-san" and confront each problem separately. My suggestion is to first see how your board is spending its volunteer hours and focus it on the issue that is costing you the most time. This way you will eliminate that issue and get on to other projects.

In my next article, I will focus on how a board spends its time and how to determine what to focus on. I will provide tools you can use to figure out where you are spending your time and I will also share some formulas to help boards determine where to spend volunteer hours to the maximum benefit of the community. ■

Mr. Munz is a former US ARMY Captain where he learned the importance of providing clear guidance and delegating to teammates. Prior to military service, Cornell University business programs taught him the importance of focusing time on tasks that have the greatest impact. Now he works with Pyramid Real Estate Group. Email your questions and comments to: russell@pyramidregroup.com