

# An Apartment Professional Wears Many Hats

By Anne Sadovsky - 2019

An apartment professional is, among many other things, the business manager and the sales director. You must have many 'degrees' in all phases of business, like:

## **Technology**

You must know how to fix the computer after the power goes out, understand all the terminology and acronyms...like motherboard, encrypted, corrupted memory model, press any key (I still haven't found a key that says 'any'), the best CRM for your SMB and terminal (is it dying?) and my favorite, when someone is telling me how to fix it on the phone; ISDW (it still doesn't work)

**Then, of course a marketing and sales 'degree' is imperative.** A professional in our field must know how to get traffic and leases in the dead of winter, at Christmas/Holiday time, when it is pouring rain, when the market is overbuilt and when the apartments haven't been updated in 10 years. You must also try to get residents qualified when they make barely enough money to live...then get them to pay the rent when their car payment seems to come first.

When the market improves you switch gears and must know how to raise rents and finesse residents to not move out over a \$50 increase. And in every market, you must be good at convincing people that it is a 'penthouse appeal' to live on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor walkup.

**Then of course there is fair housing**...you have to tell people "no, seven people really cannot live the one bedroom" and find out if a resident's snoring that rattles the neighbor's windows can be considered a handicap. So, a degree in real estate law comes in very handy. Speaking of legal, you also have to know how, when and where to file evictions, go to court and speak legalese, and charm a difficult judge...

**You would do well to have a degree in psychology.** People skills are a necessity. You must know how to calm a raging resident, nurse-maid a sick leasing consultant, be a shoulder to cry on when

someone's heart is broken, you must smile and sell, frown and collect rent, grimace when you pick up dog poop...all the while looking like a fashion model

Add these skills: you are the parking lot attendant, arbitrator when everyone is mad, the garbage collector, the light bulb checker, the entertainment director and party host/hostess, the keeper of the keys, the employer, the employee, the raccoon catcher, the bed bug detector, the water conserver, the inspector of everything, the tester, time keeper, the baby sitter when residents kids come home from school and have no supervision. You are the cookie baker, the perfect letter writer, the lonely-hearts club president, the taker of complaints and service requests and deal with offensive behaviors...all the while staying cool under fire while stressed to the max.

You, this hero/heroine know how to relocate residents after a fire, explain that they really were told that renters' insurance was a good idea, wade through water-soaked carpet up to your ankles, find the leak, and then catch the escaped boa constrictor, gerbil, ferret or lost poodle.

And, of course you know how to prioritize, keep the owners happy, control costs, increase NOI...

Some of us have tried to escape the business, only to come back. We talk about it sort of like being in prison; "I got out, but now I am back in." We have learned that we can wear all these hats by balancing and stacking them on top of each other, no matter how heavy or tall the stack becomes. Add juggling to your skills list!

We realize very quickly that being in property management IS a degree, even multiple degrees, especially that psychology one...because we never stop learning about and helping people.

Welcome to our world...and we wonder if we really are just a little weird to love, wear all the hats, and excel in the wonderful world of an apartment industry professional.