

Community MOMENTS



Amy Knepp

Community Association Manager

RealManage Washington

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Message From The President

With the official start of the fall season upon us, I am thrilled for the temperature change, getting into new rhythms with the kids in school and of course football!

I often refer to the core as a foundation made up of values. Our company values include **Integrity, Respect, Selflessness, Personal Relationships, and Always Improving.** Our definition of integrity is always doing the right thing, regardless of the circumstances. Mutual respect is the foundation for every relationship and disrespect has no place in our family internally or externally. Selfless individuals do not care about who gets the credit, but instead, put the needs of our clients and organization above everything else. We are in the business of professional services and everything we do is driven by relationships with our clients. If we are not getting better, then we are getting worse; there is absolutely no such thing as staying the same.

If you see any great examples of one of our ambassadors exhibiting our core values please let me know by emailing clientsatisfaction@realmanage.com.

Chris Ayoub
President, RealManage



Employee Spotlight: Amy Knepp
RealManage Washington



Safety In Gated vs. Non-Gated Communities
What are the security benefits?



LEED Green-building Initiatives
Saving the planet and money for your HOA



A Look Into The Future... Of Your Mailbox
Informed Delivery from the USPS



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Amy Knepp



COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGER

REALMANAGE WASHINGTON



Amy has been in the community association industry since 2013 and has been with RealManage for almost a year and a half. After moving to Washington from Pennsylvania, she started as an Assistant Community Manager in 2018. Within three weeks she was managing five communities by herself, and within three months she had a full portfolio. She really enjoyed the communities and colleagues who made each day unique and fun! Moving 3000 miles (she is still getting used to her new city and position) made it the perfect opportunity to dig deep into her portfolio in a way she never would have done in any other setting. Her favorite part has always been diving into the governing documents to learn about her communities and their specific needs, and she loves keeping up on the latest state statutes. She proudly wears the title of “document nerd”!

When asked what she finds most challenging about her job, Amy said: “One item that seems to pop-up often is educating homeowners and Board members on what our role is as the management company and what their role is as a community member. More often than not, I find that communities are transitioning with a lot of pressure and stress in their positions, but it is not because they don’t want to be a good neighbor or an active Board member... they simply were not educated on how their involvement can be positive! As managers, I feel it is our job to give our clients the tools they need to succeed, not just manage at the 10,000 foot level and make them a number in our portfolio. One way to remain successful is to continue my education through seminars and classes and then taking that education and passing it along to our clients. When you put a group of managers that have never met together

in a room, the brainstorming and idea swapping is incredible! Most of the tools I use today, and have passed on to my clients, were learned through networking with colleagues and communicating with mentors. Finding time to participate in continuing my education and training can be tricky to balance (especially during budget season!), but to be able to pass tools and knowledge on to my clients is so important for success all around.”

Amy says she feels extremely fortunate to live in the Pacific Northwest in Gig Harbor, Washington. It is only a short walk to the waterfront and she enjoys getting on the boat and out on the water at any opportunity! When not on the water, Amy enjoys spending time with family and friends. “Our friends are more like family to us, so when the call for ‘Sunday Dinner’ comes up, our table is full, our appetites are happy and the laughs are never-ending.”

I asked Amy if she had any insight or observations about RealManage. “It’s been really enjoyable to watch more and more people recognize the RealManage name and our local branch at industry events and networking mixers. The team I am fortunate enough to work alongside is incredible and grants never-ending support.” The team feels the same about Amy! She is a valuable member of the Washington branch and we are proud to have her represent us in this Employee Spotlight.

Written by **Dawn Blount, CCAM® CMCA®**
Division President: RealManage Houston



Safety in **Gated vs. Non-Gated Communities**

Everyone wants to feel safe and secure within their own community. Choosing the right balance of added protection while maintaining a welcoming entrance is often challenging. Local government regulations and added costs for association members can deter efforts aimed at better security. Finding the right balance is possible by learning more about gated vs. non-gated HOAs.

Gated Communities

Entrance gates to your community are more than just a physical barrier. Many experts agree that gates present a psychological barrier for potential criminals. The very presence of gates signals that forced entry isn't worth their time, effort, or the risk of getting caught.

Gates also reduce unauthorized vehicle and foot traffic. Residents tend to feel more secure when control measures, like that of gates, are in place to control who accesses their communities.

Added security measures such as video cameras can provide added peace-of-mind for homeowners. Integrating a video with a gate's intercom system allows residents to see and speak with their guests. Advances in video security systems have led to cameras that can

clearly identify such features as a car's make and model, along with its license plate.

Gated communities are also known to increase property values within an HOA. The attraction of living in a gated community appeals to many and can add as much as \$30,000-\$50,000 to a home's financial worth.

Associations that are gated communities must tread cautiously in how members perceive this level of security. Homeowners within the community have a responsibility for their own protection and must not rely solely on the gates or cameras. Education and communication regarding safety and security within the community can go a long way to keeping members safe.

Non-Gated Communities

There are security measures a community can implement without adding gates. Video surveillance systems of the entrance and in common areas are one way to deter criminals and other unwelcome visitors.

Video cameras are helpful but only if an association takes care of them. Ensuring the cameras are weatherproof is one step to preventing frequent replacements of expensive equipment. Securing the camera footage is essential when something does happen and the footage is necessary for evidence. Deciding whether to contract with a security company or going it alone is another important decision when it comes to camera monitoring and maintenance.

Access control systems can add security for non-gated communities by controlling access to buildings. Pairing these types of systems with video cameras and motion-detection lighting is just another way to help residents feel more secure.

While gated communities are typically quieter due to less traffic noise, road maintenance is up to the community. Roads within a non-gated community are not private and therefore not the association's responsibility. This is another important consideration when it comes to associated costs.



LEED - Green Building Initiatives

Saving the Planet and Money for Your HOA

There's no doubt that green is hot in terms of helping the environment. When it comes to your HOA, green building initiatives can also help you save money. Achieving LEED certification for a building or neighborhood speaks volumes to potential and current members about the HOA's commitment to going green. Exploring the LEED certification options and other green initiatives is imperative for HOAs who want to stay competitive, relevant, and within budget.

What is a LEED Green Building?

LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED is a third-party, internationally recognized certification program for building projects. It provides the framework for identifying and implementing the best practices for:

- Green building design
- Construction
- Operations
- Maintenance

LEED certification is adaptable throughout the lifecycle of a building—through tenant fit-out and properties with a significant retrofit. A LEED program for Neighborhood Development extends the certification from buildings to entire neighborhoods.



Types of LEED Certification

Using a points system, the LEED certification process rates five basic areas of building design and construction:

- Sustainable Sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere

- Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality

The extent of the sustainability achieved with a building determines the level of certification awarded. LEED certification levels include: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

Benefits of LEED Certification

The interest in LEED-certified homes continues to grow. According to a survey by the National Association of Realtors, more than half of responding agents said buyers are interested in the energy efficiency of their next home. A study conducted of property owners in the San Diego market revealed that LEED-certified buildings commanded higher rents than non-green buildings due to supply and demand.

In addition to saving the planet, the economic benefits of LEED-certification are equally attractive. According to the USGBC, between 2015-2018, LEED-certified buildings are estimated to have generated the following savings:

- \$1.2 billion in energy
- \$149.5 million in water
- \$715.3 million in maintenance

- \$54.2 million in waste

Obtaining official certification takes time and effort. For example, LEED for Neighborhood Development requires submitting the proper forms, payment for associated fees, and allowing time for the application review process. Preliminary review results can take anywhere from 20-25 days, depending upon the number of applicants the agency receives.

The project must have no more than 75 percent of the project's total floor area constructed. Built projects must submit applications no later three years after the project is completed. While the LEED application process may appear overwhelming, it is simply a matter of following the required steps. The USGBC even offers a public relations guideline to help you spread the word about your LEED Certification once it is awarded.

Other Green Alternatives to LEED

Pursuing LEED certification may not fit an association's current plans or future goals. There are other green community initiatives that an association may implement to save money and protect the environment. Examples of a proactive approach to going green include:

- Using solar energy
- Encouraging recycling
- Reducing paper waste at board meetings
- Conserving water with better landscaping techniques



A Look into the Future...

... of your Mailbox

Walking through the airport or clicking through your television, you may have come across a promotion from the United States Postal Service regarding “*Informed Delivery*”. Simply put, Informed Delivery allows homeowners to see what's in their mailbox from their email inbox. So what is this new feature from the USPS, clairvoyance? Magic? Or, is it a welcomed response from a time-honored service striving to turn a corner with technology? My vote is it's welcomed, and very cool!

Typically, my neighborhood mailman delivers to my mailbox around 2 pm while I'm at work. However, like magic, I've known since 8 am what was to arrive that afternoon.

Every morning, I can preview my mail scheduled to deliver that day via email notification, online dashboard, or mobile app. Users also have the ability to interact with digital content provided by business mailers (e.g., special offers, related web links) directly from Informed Delivery! So when my HOA assessment statement arrives, I'll not only see an image of the envelope but also, I may be able to click a link that leads me to anyplace relevant to that envelope, like my community association's website.

Email is the dominant communication platform for most individuals; however, regular mail is still a daily part of all of our lives. USPS set out to integrate the two worlds by bridging a homeowner's need to interact digitally without losing the importance of their physical mail. The USPS was already digitally scanning the front of all letter-size mail pieces to assist in the sorting and delivery of mail. With their existing technology, it was a logical transition to display those same images to homeowners in advance of the delivery of the physical mail.

Informed Delivery is completely free and safe. The USPS Information Security program and the Inspection Service monitors the network for unusual activity to ensure that your information is kept safe. It is available nationwide to eligible residential consumers as well as those with PO Boxes in an eligible Zip Code. During the sign-up process, homeowners will be prompted to complete an identity verification process to confirm their home address.

If you are interested in Informed Delivery, please visit informedelivery.usps.com to sign up. Follow the on-screen prompts to check if your individual delivery address is eligible for the feature. Once opted-in, enjoy the service and be on the lookout for what's next

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