



MORE is Better: The Power of Lifetime Learning

An interview with Cyntiann King, Vice President of Learning and Development for Weidner Apartment Homes with Leslie Mizerak, PCC, SPHR

INTERVIEW

Thank you for joining us today for another Infuse interview talking with the pros, where we hear insights on how the pros have traveled their roads to success. My name is Leslie Mizerak with Mizerak Executive Coaching and today I'm talking to Cyntiann King.

TODAY'S SPECIAL GUEST



Cyntiann King, NALP, AIT, ATD B.S. & M.S. Education, Master Trainer has 25 years experience in professional training and development and property management. She has delivered dynamic workshops, seminars, webinars, and panel discussion on the national, state and local level for over 200 associations and organizations and 30 of today's top 50 multi-family firms.

When did you first decide you wanted to be an educator?

Well, I first decided to be an educator actually as a five-year-old. I come from a family of teachers and I have some great family focus on being a lifelong learner; just for an example my dad was a self-made man, put himself through college, went from a factory shop floor to the vice president of quality control throughout his career: a lot of education and more importantly, a lot of exponential learning. My mom, at the age of 82, decided to get her college degree in Psychology so she could understand people better, how do you like that? So, I really grew up in an environment that really valued education and I found a lot of great energy, focus, and ongoing enthusiasm for life in general to just really be an educator, as well as, a lifelong learner myself.



Leslie Mizerak, Executive Coach & Leadership Facilitator. Founder of Lead Coach Mentor, LLC. Dedicated to helping people, teams and organizations connect their thoughts about leadership to their actions.

What do you think is the greatest barrier to an effective training program?

You know, that's a really good question. I think that in our industry we become better and better at

“ So, there are a lot of free online learning opportunities that anybody can get, and these are not necessarily just Property Management.

really identifying the needs of our learner, considering the different audiences that are going to be a part of effective training programs, and really making sure that we have performance improvement. The big deal is really - do a great needs assessment, understand what really needs to happen, and then the best venues to make that happen.

So, for example, there's been a movement in the last, oh probably 15 years now, to do this called the 70-20-10 approach. In fact, there is a website called 70-20-10, 70-20-10 Forum etc. The thinking here is that 70% is experiential learning. So, this is where you are really helping associates solve problems on the job, they're experiencing new and challenging opportunities and situations, and then working with other people who are helping them reflect and understand what was learned and what needs to be learned. So that's a very effective highly engag-

ing motivational way to really learn.

20% is exposure in more of a social learning experience. Meaning, do we have communities, networks where people can share in a casual manner and really get to understand what is it that others know that they need to embrace as well? And this is also where coaching and mentoring falls in with lots of great feedback and continuing exposure to really know what they need to know, how they need to know it, while keeping in mind a person's preferred learning style.

And then the 10th part of it is the formal learning. So, this is where you have structured courses, structured programs, etc. So a really great effective training program considers all of those elements and really puts in to practice a multitude of ways that different learners can learn and get reinforced.

The whole reason why training programs even exist is to make sure that people are getting what they need in terms of the skill and giving them access to the practice of that and then the authority to use it. I like to say “skill will access authority”; we can't control someone's will, but we can certainly provide them with the vehicles and the venues to learn skills,

access to practice it, and then the authority to take intelligent risks and use that information.

How can multifamily management leaders find ways to grow and thereby lead beyond the status quo?

Well, I think that's really important to consider throughout everyone's career. I like to look at every single person within a team as a leader and if you're going to lead by example or lead by interest, you have to be someone who wants to grow, and to sell some of the ways that people can find ways to

“ I like to say “skill will access authority”

grow is to look at what is the team doing. Can we change roles, tasks, responsibilities? What's the best way to understand the why between the how and what, rotating repetitive tasks, clearly defining goals and action steps within a project: really giving that opportunity for everybody in the group so that they can lead beyond just the status quo.

And what do I mean by leaving behind the status quo. This is really looking at how are we as leaders dually responsible for

“And if you think about it, everybody who's managing their asset is really like an entrepreneur in the property management business.”

the growth and motivation and engagement of everybody. The Hay Group did this huge study in July of 2018 and found that 71% of American workers reported feeling either unmotivated and or disengaged somewhere during their work week.

What that means is we've got these golden opportunities to really help people get re-engaged and leading beyond the status quo is more than just what's happening today. What are we doing about tomorrow? How are we helping people design a professional development plan? What's the target next year for each and every person? I found a great resource with the book “Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em” by Beverly Kaye and one of the major strategies that they talk about is the ‘Stay Interview’.

Stay Interview: let's talk about that.

Think about this... when do people ask an employee “what does it take for you to stay”?

Well that's an exit interview, Cynthiann.

Yes, right, Leslie, it is an exit interview.

So, the opportunity is to connect with them throughout their tenure with the organization.

Right. So instead of an exit interview we want to have a stay interview. So that means setting some time aside, prepping your employee for this meeting, but really asking them what's it going to take for you to stay... in this position... in our company... where would you like to aim... and see now you've got multi-family management leaders who are really becoming creative leaders fully engaging their folks, motivating people to become all they can be, while also becoming your best self because you're helping to grow people and yourself too.

That's a great perspective: becoming your best self, Cynthiann.

What avenues are available to multi-family professionals who want to gain more responsibility and rewards in their career?

Well this is really interesting. Best in Class companies are 73% more likely to ensure managers meet with attendees' post training.

So that means the way to really develop others is to help develop managers. Managers want to get into the habit of asking “how will you act on what you just learned?” Then, observe and continue to reinforce what you want more of. In the end, training is all about performance improvement.

How do you know that performance improvement has occurred? You've got to inspect what you expect; you have to observe, and you have to encourage people to really use what they've learned.

One of the things that I found effective is to provide to the manager the key topics, phrases, and behaviors that an attendee should likely glean from having come to that class. Now the manager can reinforce these. Easy thing that I will say is something like “stop, start, continue.” do you want to continue doing?”

Can you recommend any online learning resources?

Yes. Very good question. So, there are a lot of free online learning opportunities that anybody can get, and these are not necessarily just Property Management. For example, if someone is in the IT world, you can go to a place called code academy,

Someone who's in marketing and wants to learn more about SEO and social media, they can go to something called MOZ.

If you wanted to increase your savvy and financials, money, budgets etc., there is a great free online learning group called Learnvest, like invest, except its Learnvest.

If somebody wants to be a better coaching, they can look into "My Own Business" and then, you probably have already heard about edX. They have 300 free online learning classes: 300 courses including things like decision-making, negotiating, communication, excellent phone techniques and they're not necessarily, again, Property Management specific; yet, these are great foundational and advanced business skills someone could use.

There's another area, MIT has open courseware for an entrepreneur. And if you think about it, everybody who's managing their asset is really like an entrepreneur in the property management business.

Here is something really amazing, the University of Pennsylvania in Kutztown has 100 free on demand college courses on topics like project management, time management, business

planning, team building: what a great resource there, and then of course YouTube and Ted Talk. Those are really fabulous.

I don't know if you even

“ So instead of an exit interview we want to have a *stay* interview.

know about the Saylor Foundation. They have free bachelor's degree courses. The public library is a great place to go for this. There's just some really amazing places where you can go and get free learning to increase your ability to be a leader and to increase the ability of people in any phase of their career with property management. How rewarding is that to grow? How rewarding is that to feel like you're constantly learning, constantly growing, constantly getting an opportunity to understand the world at large and apply it to our fabulous industry.

What about resource for Property Management and the multifamily industry?

Yes, resources specifically in property management of multifamily industry abound these days. One, there so many wonderful vendor partners who are offering webinars and online classes and in-person classes. I highly recommend that you speak with your vendor partners to see what's available with them.

Certainly the National Apartment Association has some fantastic courses that are offered on the designation national level like NALP, CAM CAPS, CAMT+E, CAS for those other vendor partners, and then local Apartment Associations frequently have terrific classes whether they are webinars, subject matter experts speaking on topics; of course, the National Apartment Association has their annual convention this year, it's June 25th, I think to the 28th, and it's called Apartmentalize. The National Apartment Association Apartmentalize: it's in Denver this year and I think they have like 60 or 70 educational sessions.

I'm honored to speak again in the deep dive myself there, and there are some just really great opportunities to get very specific

property management education there, no matter what area of our great industry you're working with in.

Thank you so much. I have one more question for you, Cynthiann.

What are three daily habits management leadership should adopt?

Management leaders should adopt a daily practice of being a lifelong learner themselves. First and foremost, how are you growing yourself? So easy to take a TED Talk... so easy to take five minutes and read a blog, so easy to ask others what are they learning and what could you learn from? So, I think that's one great way to really grow yourself.

I think another great daily habit management leadership take is to really make sure that they understand the end in mind. So, if the end of mine is to really to value our people, what are we doing to value our people and make sure that they're engaged and motivated? And learning is one of those great tools in great venues to do that.

Another really great daily habit that management leaders should adopt is getting into asking people this question: "Tell me more." That way you're going to learn, not only what they know, what they want to know, but it's also going to expand your horizons and

what you might need to get into yourself, so that you can progress and continue to learn and lead at the same time.

Cynthiann, is there anything else you would like to share with us?

First and foremost, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to share just a little bit about my passion. Love learning, love anything to do with learning and I feel so richly blessed that I've been able to work in a terrific industry and use my special talent skills and passion to really help others with their skills, talents and passion as well.

One of the other pieces I wanted to do as a shout out, as a thank you to so many of my mentors and coaches and people throughout the apartment industry who have invested their time and talent with me to help me grow.

I really learned all about the apartment industry in the very beginning of my career by attending National Apartment Association education designation classes. So, get a special shout-out and thank you to NAA, which is now called NAAEI. Thanks so much for having me.

Thank you. This wraps up our interview today brought to you by Spherexx.com. Please reach out Spherexx with any questions or comments by submitting the contact form below.

MAKING YOUR BEST
BETTER
with
INSPIRATION &
IMPLEMENTATION



MIZERAK
EXECUTIVE
COACHING

Elements of Excellence

- The Person - the People
- Their Goals
- Their Work
- Their Actions
- Their Results & Accomplishments

OFFICIAL MEMBER

Forbes

Coaches
Council

407.622.1433
MizerakCoaching.com