

NAHP Update

Sharpening Your Strategic Thinking Skills | BY JENNIFER JONES

IN THIS ISSUE

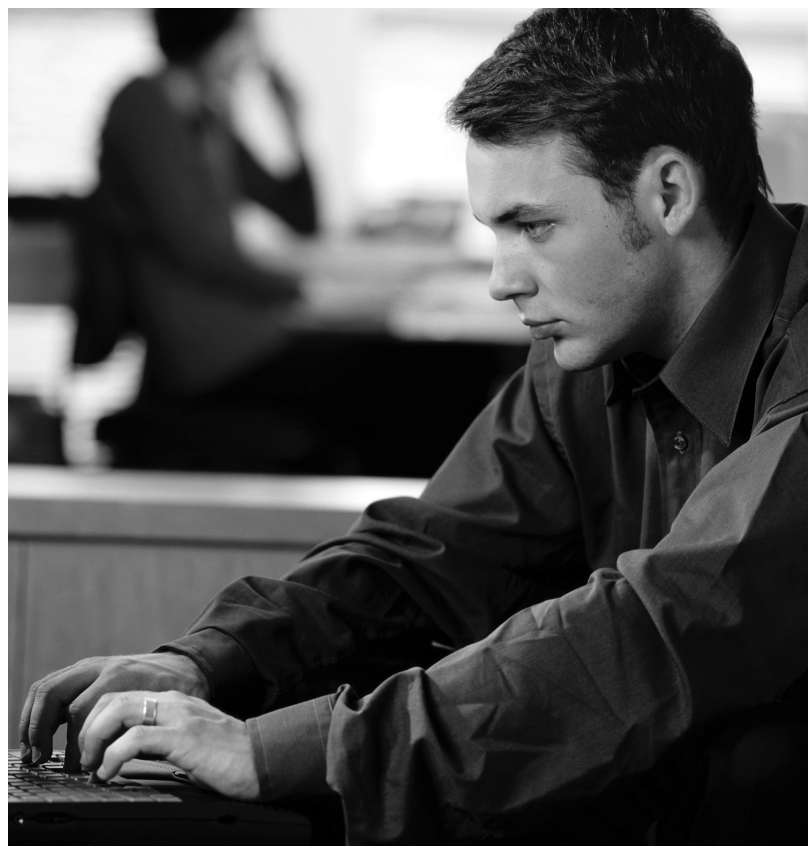
- 4 Being Prepared For Anything
- 5 Experts Corner
Protect Your Occupants and Properties
- 6 NAHP Profile
Ana L. Serrano: Being in the Right Place

Learning what it means to be a strategic thinker and discovering new approaches for anticipating and solving problems was the subject of the *NAHMA Presents Key People Skills for Property Management Staffers: Strategic Thinking and Problem Solving* webinar in November.

The training session, led by Brenda Harrington, founder of Adaptive Leadership Strategies LLC, offered participants the skills to break out of a routine and learn to work more efficiently, thereby becoming better communicators and achieving better results.

Harrington focused on five key aspects of strategic thinking: being a strategic thinker, level of strategy, creating strategic alignment, critical thinking and making decisions with impact.

She said it is important to focus on how you think versus what you do. This can be accomplished by taking a step back and thinking about what you are doing and why. Things change overtime, so



an approach that worked in the past may not be the best solution now.

"A number of things change, even when it comes to things we have been doing for a long time," Harrington said.

Decisions makers have to be curious. This allows them to think more extensively

about what they are doing and how they can change their approach. This could be enacting creative solutions to common challenges to achieve favorable outcomes. It also means replacing judgment with inquisitiveness. For example, a particular solution may have been tried a couple



NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (NAHMA)—Protecting the Interests of Affordable Housing Property Managers and Owners

Welcome New Certificants!

NAHP

- >> Michaela Gray
Wesley Living
Memphis, TN
- >> Christine St. Laurent
WinnResidential
North Grosvenordale, CT
- >> Karen E. Zayac
Diocesan Housing Services
Camden, NJ

NAHP-e

- >> Sarah E. Clark
First Realty Management
Corp.
Boston, MA

NAHMS

- >> Khalil Adams
The Michaels Organization
Marlton, NJ
- >> Shawn Thompson
Lutheran Social Ministries
of New Jersey
Burlington, NJ

NAHMT

- >> Christopher Power
First Realty Management
Boston, MA

Earn one of NAHMA's prestigious professional credentials, which are dedicated solely to recognizing and promoting achievement of the highest possible professional standards in affordable housing management. Programs include:

- National Affordable Housing Professional (NAHP™)
- National Affordable Housing Professional-Executive (NAHP-e™)
- Specialist in Housing Credit Management™ (SHCM™)
- Certified Professional of Occupancy™ (CPO™)
- Advanced Issues in HUD Occupancy™ (ACPO™)
- Fair Housing Compliance™ (FHC™)
- National Affordable Housing Maintenance Technician (NAHMT™)
- National Affordable Housing Maintenance Supervisor (NAHMS™)
- Credential for Green Property Management

For more information, go to www.nahma.org and click on Education.



of years ago and it did not work. Harrington said that solution could be revisited now by looking at what has changed over the years. Those changes could make the solution feasible now.

Harrington said there were three levels of strategy: corporate strategy, business unit-level strategy and market-level strategy, and knowing the difference helps facilitate better decisions.

Corporate strategies are the ones that answer the question: What are we trying to achieve? For example, that

could be growth, stability, or even cutting back. Business-level strategies answer the questions: How will we compete? How will we differentiate ourselves from our competitors? The answers could include looking at customer relationships, being product or service leaders, or offering the best cost. Market-level strategies answer the question, how will we strengthen our desired position? Harrington said that could involve market penetration, market development, product or service develop-

ment, or diversification.

Creating strategic alignment involves making sure your corporate, business-level and market-level objectives are reflected in how you do business.

Harrington said it is important to remember nothing stays static, so the way you do business has to evolve to reflect the changes in the environment around you. She said a way to make sure you are still on the right track is to ask questions and observe trends. It also involves completing

PRESIDENT

Timothy Zaleski, SHCM, NAHP-e
Tim.Zaleski@McCormack
Baron.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kris Cook, CAE
kris.cook@nahma.org

MANAGER, EDUCATION & TRAINING

Natasha Patterson, ACA
npatterson@nahma.org

DIRECTOR, MEMBERSHIP

Brenda Moser
brenda.moser@nahma.org

EDITOR

Jennifer Jones
jjones@nahma.org

DESIGN

Mary Butler
butler5s@comcast.net

2019 NAHMA CERTIFICATION REVIEW BOARD

Chair

Gwen Volk, SHCM, NAHP-e, CPO, FHC

Vice Chair

Rich Skoczylas, FHC, SHCM, NAHP-e,
CPO

Members

Cindy Lamb, SCHM, NAHP-e
Gianna Richards, SHCM, NAHP-e
Julie Wall, NAHP-e, FHC, CPO, SHCM
Angie Waller, FHC, SHCM, NAHP-e,
CPO, ACPO

NAHP Update is published four times a year by the National Affordable Housing Management Association, 400 North Columbus St, Suite 203, Alexandria, VA 22314, Phone 703-683-8630, website: www.nahma.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Complimentary to NAHMA credential holders.

QUERIES: Letters to the Editor and other queries should be sent to Jennifer Jones, NAHMA manager of communications and PR, jjones@nahma.org or to the address above.

NOTICE: Contents of NAHP Update should not be regarded as the final authority on policies, regulations and legal or other issues. Opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent opinions or policies of NAHMA's board of directors or staff or consultants. NAHMA is not liable in any way for omissions or inaccuracies.

COPYRIGHT: Contents of NAHP Update are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without permission and attribution.

tasks in support of your objectives.

For example, if your property is updating its weight room, you could poll the residents to see what types of exercise they enjoy doing and what equipment they use. Their answers would tell you if you should purchase kettlebells, elliptical machines or some other type of equipment that you can

may have been a priority at one time, but are no longer as important to completing the current task.

It also is not about finding flaws. Instead, it is about digging deeper and exploring a different approach.

"Critical thinking means not accepting something at face value," Harrington said. "It's about identifying trends and understanding your

word 'but' with 'and,'" Harrington said. "It might open you up to thinking about things differently."

Different thinking styles can result in a variety of perspectives that reflect different experiences and vantage points. This can result in a learning opportunity or being exposed to new ideas. It also spurs creativity.

A challenge can be get-

"I DON'T KNOW OF ANYTHING MORE DIFFICULT than going back and re-evaluating decisions. It could be a course correction. It doesn't mean that anything is wrong. It could just mean that there are better outcomes that could be achieved now."

be sure the residents will use rather than buying a little bit of everything that sits idle.

Critical thinking, according to Harrington, involves asking different questions and challenging the processes in place. It also involves re-evaluating previous decisions and being focused on the right priorities.

"I don't know of anything more difficult than going back and re-evaluating decisions," Harrington said. "It could be a course correction. It doesn't mean that anything is wrong. It could just mean that there are better outcomes that could be achieved now."

She said it is easy to get caught up on things that

thinking style and the style of others."

How do you identify different thinking styles? Harrington said there are big-picture thinkers and detail-oriented thinkers.

Big-picture thinkers focus on ideas, planning and connecting with others. Detail-oriented thinkers focus on productivity, doing things themselves and prefer one-on-one collaborations rather than working in groups.

Once you have identified the different styles, you have to recognize the advantages and disadvantages of each and then develop a plan to work toward middle ground.

"Work on replacing the

ting everyone on the same page and agreeing on the same goals. It requires listening to everyone to determine his or her thinking style and determining the best way forward based on who is in the group working on the task at hand.

When it comes to making decisions, Harrington said, it can be difficult to balance what should be done with what has to be done quickly. She said sometimes responding quickly is a Band-Aid.

It is better to take the time to address situations for the long term and then you will have a greater impact. **NU**

Jennifer Jones is manager of communications and public relations for NAHMA.

Being Prepared For Anything

Michael Alexander has been through five hurricanes in Houston, Texas. When the most recent one, Harvey, made landfall in August 2017, 39 counties were declared Presidential Disaster Areas. As of April 2018, 55 properties were still not operational, he told the audience in the NAHMA Members Talk Trends and Best Practices panel during the association's October meeting. Alexander, the executive director of AHMA East Texas, and Angie Waller, vice president of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) compliance at the Ambling Management Company, spoke about the trends in Disaster Recovery.

"There are over 3,500 households still waiting for housing," Alexander said. "We had an emergency plan in place at the AHMA, but we couldn't get to the properties. Everything was flooded. I was in Seattle and couldn't get back for two weeks. Managers couldn't get to properties to take care of residents."

Alexander said the AHMA offered as much assistance as it could; however, it can only do so much. For example, the AHMA could not call the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on behalf of members that may not have had the ability to contact the agency on their own. The best the association could do was provide updated FEMA information in English and Spanish to everyone who needed it.

"We think HUD is ready. We're ready. FEMA is ready," Alexander said. "We're not."

He said during the crisis HUD wanted reports and managers were busy trying to help their residents.

Alexander said, "They want us to inspect units and I have a lady crying, asking where will she stay?"

He said one of the biggest things they have all learned from Harvey is that the front-line staff has to be prepared and have the resources in place before a disaster strikes.

Waller said the planning starts well before a disaster, which could be weather related or manmade, such as snow, hurricanes, flooding or fire, just to name a few.

"Build relationships with emergency personnel," Waller said. "Prepare information on shelters. Where to take pets. What supplies to have on hand. And, partner with a vendor to be ready for a response."

She said every property should have an emergency response team ready that can be sent when it is safe to return to the property to assist residents and assess damage.

Waller said on-site staff needs to check emergency kits and generators on a monthly basis. She also said the property should have regular drills for staff and residents.

"Communicate with residents on what to expect from us and how we can keep track of residents—if they are going



PHOTO BY LARRY FALKOW

Michael Alexander, executive director of AHMA east Texas, on left, and Angie Waller, vice president of HUD compliance at the Ambling Management Company, on right, talk about trends in disaster recovery during a panel moderated by Juliana Bilowich, NAHMA manager of government affairs.

off-site and with whom," Waller said. "And, establish a disaster hotline for residents."

All disasters are different, so Waller said it is important to take notes during the drills to see where improvement is needed.

For example, she said residents were not interested in doing drills monthly or even quarterly. So now, Ambling properties conduct drills twice a year in coordination with the local Fire Marshall's Office. They make the drills an event, complete with food and an "after drill" party.

Alexander said it is important residents understand that if there is an alert after hours that it is not a drill so that the warning is not ignored.

The panel was asked what

is the liability to staff if there is a mandatory evacuation and residents refuse to leave. Waller said her company had actually come across that situation.

"We allowed staff to leave. We knocked on every door with a police officer who had them sign a waiver. We told them staff would be back when it was safe," Waller said.

Another audience member asked about finding residents who do not tell you where they are going. Alexander said to start by calling the person on the emergency form. He also suggested looking on social media.

"Do everything you can to try to locate them," Alexander said.

"Document, document, document," Waller added.

NU—JJ

Protect Your Occupants And Properties

As a property manager, you can do everything to maintain your properties, prevent structural damage, reduce resident issues and make your properties attractive to potential residents, but the one thing you cannot control is resident behavior. But, what if you could minimize the impact resident behavior

addressed, it can lead to significant property issues like mold growth, bad odors, and structural damage. These effect the health of your property and the health of your residents.

Do not worry you say, "It's all under control. After all, my property adheres to the most updated code requirements and I've got bathroom fans and kitchen fans to handle the



can have on your property?

When it comes to the negative effects of moisture accumulation, there is something you can do.

Let's face it, basic lifestyle behavior produces a significant amount of moisture from showering, cooking, washing the dishes and just everyday living. If that moisture accumulation is not properly

moisture build up." Such fans only address a certain square footage, but most importantly, those solutions require your residents to actually turn the fans on every time they are needed. And, one thing you can depend on is that human behavior is not dependable. You cannot rely on your residents to ensure that moisture does not become a big problem for you.

That is where AVIR ventilation comes in. AVIR ventilation units are technologically advanced, highly effective, stand-alone solutions to your moisture and indoor air quality problems. AVIR will reduce moisture that causes mold, window condensation and saturation in building materials. AVIR products will expel moisture, bad odors, gases and other indoor air pollutants to maintain your property in pristine condition.

AVIR constantly monitors the indoor air conditions in real time and self-adjusts to maintain the optimal rate of expulsion, regardless of the differing lifestyles and behaviors of your residents. They are completely maintenance free and best of all, they require no human intervention and can be hard-wired so that residents cannot alter the settings.

AVIR units have been installed in affordable housing projects where government pressure has mounted of late to improve indoor air quality. They have been installed in military housing and in privately managed properties across the country and have been working effectively for well over a decade.

One AVIR unit can effectively address the moisture and IAQ issues up to 2000 square



feet. They do not need to be tied into the HVAC system and will improve overall HVAC efficiency by maintaining a drier environment. They provide sensible, constant ventilation to prevent stagnation and meet code requirements. AVIR will help improve the overall energy efficiency of your properties, which will help you earn an improved return on your investment.

While we cannot yet control the actions and behaviors of residents, AVIR can certainly help you control the impact those behaviors have on your property and simultaneously provide a drier, cleaner and healthier indoor air environment for your residents. **NU**

CONTACT

For more information or to learn more about special financing programs available, call Phil Konigsberg at 1-866-486-4339, ext. 210, email phil@hqhometek.com, or visit <https://www.hqhometek.com/trades-and-services/property-managers/>.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent opinions or policies of the NAHMA Board of Directors or staff. NAHMA is not liable in any way for omissions or inaccuracies and does not officially endorse products.



Being in the Right Place

NAME: Ana L. Serrano, CPO, SHCM, FHC, NAHP

MANAGEMENT COMPANY: POAH Communities

POSTION: Senior Property Manager at Hillcrest Village Apartments

When Ana Serrano's husband passed away 12 years ago, she decided to move from Florida back north with her two young sons. The decision was an easy one for her. She and her late husband had family in the area. In fact, Serrano, who was born in Puerto Rico, split her time between the islands growing up—Puerto Rico and Rhode Island.

"I used to say when I retire I'm going to spend three months—January, February and March—in Puerto Rico

and the rest of the time in Rhode Island," she said. "I have always considered Rhode Island my home."

Once she resettled, she saw an advertisement for a position with POAH Communities. She has been there ever since. Today, Serrano is the senior property manager at Hillcrest Village Apartments, a 130-unit property for seniors and residents with disabilities.

Despite not having any experience in the affordable housing industry, she figured her skill set would translate in the new setting.

"I read the requirements for the position and said I can do that since I managed 13 clubs [for the corporate office of Broward County Boys & Girls Club]," Serrano said. "The difference, this is subsidized housing and tax credit.

If there is something I don't know, I will learn it."

She said the work is challenging and keeps you busy, but that she would not have it any other way.

"We all have those moments when you want to throw your hands up," Serrano said. "But if you are in the right place, eventually you just open your eyes and say, 'Yes, this is where I'm supposed to be.'"

In addition to her work with POAH, Serrano is a board member for NEAHMA and the Rhode Island chapter of the Institute of Real Estate Management. She also holds several industry credentials.

Her twin sons, 22, share her work ethic and love of learning. Both boys attend Rhode Island College where Jose is studying law and

Jerardo is earning a degree in accounting.

"I told them when they were in high school to have a Plan A, then a Plan B and even a Plan C," Serrano said. "And to even know what you are going to do if Plan C doesn't work."

However, it is not all work and no play for Serrano and her boys. This past summer, the trio planned a series of day trips including hiking Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, Mass., and visiting Wachusett Brewing Company located in Westminster, Mass., where she said beer was good and the food truck had the best fish tacos she ever tasted in her life.

"I love the outdoors, especially hiking in the mountains. When you are on top of that mountain, you feel like you can conquer the world," Serrano said. **NU** —JJ

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGERS AND OWNERS

www.nahma.org
Alexandria, VA 22314
400 North Columbus Street, Suite 203
National Affordable Housing Management Association

Winter 2019

NAHPupdate

PRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hyattsville, MD
Permit No. 61