

TASKMASTER OR TEACHER? The type of supervisor you choose to be makes a difference



JULIE L. MUIR
(JULIEMUIR@ELLIOTTASSOCIATESINC.COM),
CPM, IS A REAL ESTATE BROKER AND SENIOR PROPERTY MANAGER FOR ELLIOTT ASSOCIATES, INC. IN PORTLAND, ORE.

SOME SUPERVISORS MAKE A POSITIVE IMPRESSION ON THEIR EMPLOYEES' LIVES, WHILE OTHERS MAKE LIFE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEIR SUBORDINATES. IF YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE QUALIFIED, HARD-WORKING, CAREER-ORIENTED INDIVIDUALS TAKE YOUR PLACE WHEN YOU RETIRE, IT'S WORTHWHILE TO BE A POSITIVE SUPERVISOR BY CHOOSING TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER.

As a supervisor, one of your many responsibilities is to "raise" your assistants to take over your job someday. It's your duty to see they are trained properly and have the courage to persevere and excel. *How* you go about shaping their careers is just as important as your methodology.

First, decide if your assistants are worthy of your time and effort. Affirm their worthiness by looking for the following characteristics:

Commitment: There's no sense in trying if they're not interested or committed for the long haul.

Aptitude: If they are not capable of understanding the basic premise of property management, move on.

Ambition: They must want to be great, and serve their clients with excellence!

Determination: If they fall off the horse, you want them to get right back on. It's a learning opportunity.

Passion: Are they excited about real estate? Once you have deserving students, only *you* can foster their success. So, taskmaster or teacher... which will you be?

One of my past colleagues was definitely a taskmaster. I felt ashamed at the way she held back a very talented "student." This student was assigned only very minimal tasks (filing, etc.) and quickly became bored.

I decided right then that I'd be a *teacher*—a mentor and a guide who would encourage and build up individuals who have the desire to succeed. As a former assistant myself, I know that it is extremely difficult to advance in the industry without someone being willing to give you an opportunity.

When mentoring, you must show trust in your students' abilities. Teach them the daily complexities of the business, but also allow them to take control. For example, when a tenant has a question, I expect my assistants to look at the lease and determine how to respond. Then we discuss the proper course of action together. Fairly often, they are already on the right track because they did the research, came to an educated conclusion and drafted a recommendation. *That* is how they learn. It's extremely rewarding to see their faces when they get it right. It gives them such confidence!

The benefits of choosing to be a teacher are twofold. First, you are molding capable individuals who can take over for you one day. Second, you are making a positive difference in the lives of the people around you. We need more students of property management. We need more success stories, and you can help. Choose to be a teacher. ■