

Drawing the Line: 5 Ways to Set Boundaries in the Workplace

By Stephanie Anderson, CAM, CAPS

In the demanding world of property management where no two days are alike, establishing boundaries is not just about safeguarding personal space; it's about maintaining professional integrity, ensuring work-life balance, and promoting a healthy workplace culture. The responsibilities associated with working in property management can sometimes blur the lines between professional obligations and personal time. Drawing clear boundaries helps in managing these responsibilities effectively while avoiding burnout. Here are five ways property management professionals can set these crucial limits in the workplace.

1. Define Your Availability

The nature of property management often requires you to be on call around the clock, but this doesn't mean you should be available 24/7 for all issues. Start by clearly defining your working hours to your team. Make it known when you will be available for routine inquiries and how emergencies outside of these hours should be handled. Consider establishing a system or protocol for what qualifies as an emergency. By doing so, you not only protect your personal time but also empower your team to make decisions in your absence, fostering a sense of trust and independence.

2. Learn to Delegate

Delegation is a critical skill in boundary setting. Understandably, there's often a desire to handle everything personally to ensure it's done correctly. However, this approach can lead to burnout and reduce efficiency over time. Identify tasks that can be assigned to others and invest time in training your team. Trusting your team to handle these tasks frees you to focus on high-priority or strategic work, ultimately benefiting the property's management and performance.

3. Communicate Clearly

Effective communication is the cornerstone of setting boundaries. It's essential to articulate your limits clearly and assertively without coming across as unapproachable or rigid. When a new project lands on your desk at the end of a busy day, for instance, it's crucial to communicate realistic expectations about your ability to take it on. This might involve negotiating deadlines or asking for support from another team member. It's also important to provide rationales for your boundaries to ensure understanding and minimize resentment or confusion.

4. Embrace the Power of No

The ability to say no is perhaps one of the most powerful tools in boundary-setting. It's also one of the hardest to wield. In property management, where the urge to please residents and superiors is strong, saying no might seem counterintuitive. However, agreeing to every request or demand can spread you too thin, leading to decreased performance and dissatisfaction.

Evaluate requests critically and consider whether they align with your core responsibilities and goals. Saying no allows you to say yes to priorities that truly matter.

5. Prioritize Self-Care

Finally, recognize that setting boundaries is a form of self-care. In a role that demands constant problem-solving and adaptability, taking time for yourself is vital. This might mean physically removing yourself from your work environment to recharge, pursuing hobbies, or simply enjoying uninterrupted time with loved ones. Prioritizing self-care is not selfish; it's a crucial aspect of maintaining your ability to perform at your best in the workplace.

Setting boundaries helps us maintain focus on our tasks, prevents burnout, and ensures that our personal lives receive the attention they deserve. So, take that step today and set some clear boundaries to achieve the harmony you've been longing for. Embrace the power of saying no when necessary, prioritize your well-being, and reclaim control over your time. Remember, work-life balance is not just an ideal; it's a necessity.