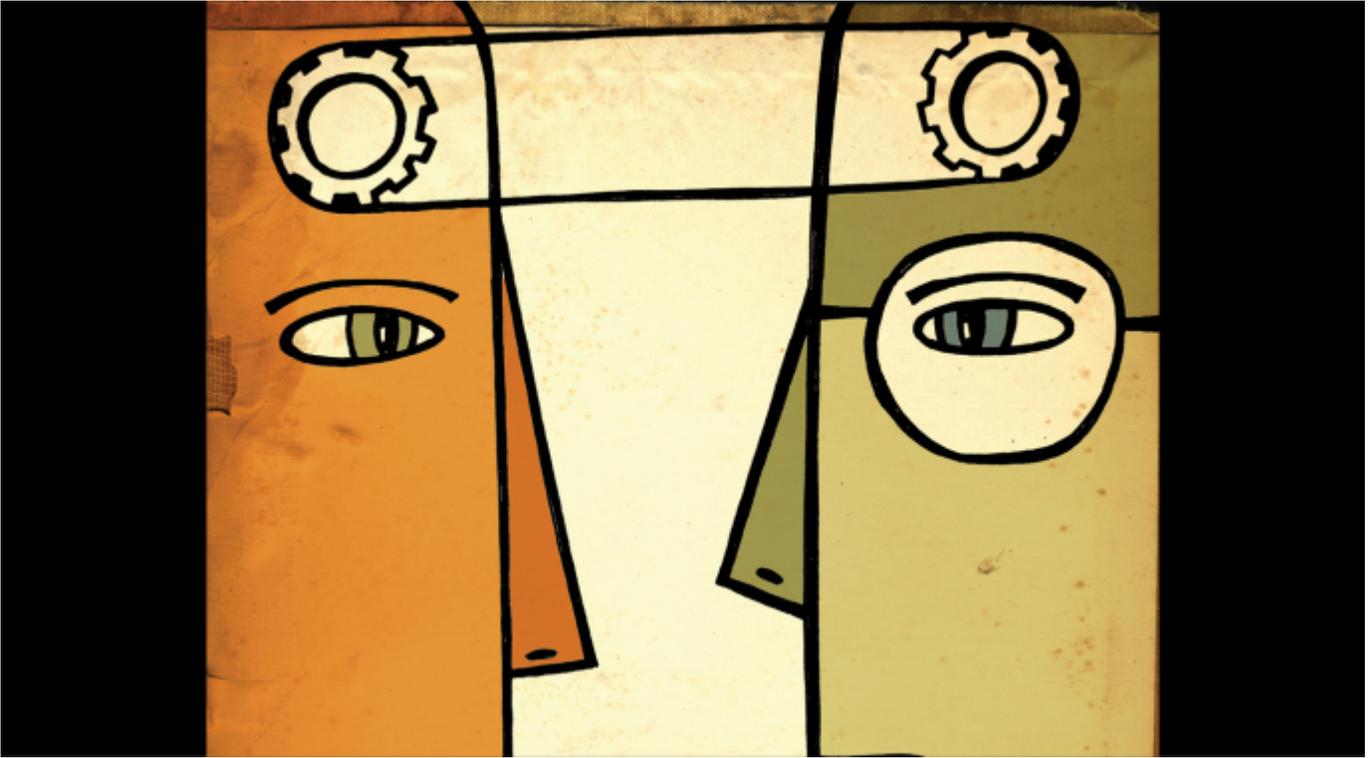


Remote Leadership: Turned On, Tuned In, Uninterrupted



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By Stephen Ursery

In an environment in which so many apartment team members find themselves working remotely, effective leadership has never been more critical. Today's rental-housing leaders not only have to coax strong performance out of their associates, but they also must do so in an extremely stressful time for employees.

That was one of the major takeaways of the "Remote Leadership: Turned On, Tuned In, Uninterrupted" session at Apartmentalize 2021.

Citing a recent survey from Monster.com, Charlotte Pisciotta, Vice President of Full House Marketing, which provides marketing, training and staffing support for apartment operators, noted that nearly 70% of today's remote workers describe themselves as "burned out."

"Burnout is real, guys," she said.

However, the right leadership style can go a long way in helping overwhelmed and exhausted associates, Pisciotta added.

"Tune into your teams. The key is empathic listening. Ask to understand," she said. "Avoid making snap judgments. Ask questions that can help you figure out what's going on. Is there something in their personal life? Is it a family issue? Teams turn to 'on' when they feel a sincere human touch."

Setting expectations is especially critical in a remote working environment, said Gabrielle Bouknight, Director of Training and Development at HHHunt Apartment Living.

“We need to ask our team members, ‘What do you expect from us?’” Bouknight said. “A lot of them are not used to working in this remote environment, so we need to ask them what they need from us as leaders.”

Leaders at HHHunt Apartment Living have made it a point during the pandemic to conduct one-on-one check-ins with team members at least once every 90 days, according to Bouknight.

“We’ve had wild success – our team members really appreciate that one-on-one time with their managers,” she said.

Leaders in today’s remote working environment also must be “servant leaders,” said Marnie Sauls, Executive Director of Residential Management at The Cordish Companies.

A servant leader puts the needs of others first and focuses on helping team members develop and perform as strongly as possible. “You’ve really got to check your ego at the door because this is not about you anymore,” Sauls said. “It’s about empowering your team.”

Effective leaders in today’s remote workplace also make sure that company policy and procedures are written down, she added.

“You need to make sure things are written down because when you write things down, it removes that margin for misinterpretation,” Sauls said. “It also allows your direct reports to process information at their own pace. It’s not about your pace. It’s about theirs.”

In the end, adapting to the needs of today’s remote workers is an urgent issue facing apartment company leaders, according to Rebecca Rosario, Visionary at Full House Marketing.

“Our employees are tuning out and turning off because they need and frankly deserve more from us,” Rosario said. “Better understanding human needs, rethinking and retooling meetings and connecting beyond the video call will keep your remote teams ‘turned on and tuned in.’”

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