



Sharon Drechsler-Scott, RRP

As head of SharonINK PR & Marketing (SharonINK.com), Sharon Drechsler-Scott engineers better messaging, visibility and credibility for clients involved in the timeshare industry. She is a registered resort professional (RRP) with the American Resort Development Association (ARDA), Washington, DC, and Contributing Editor for Resort Trades magazine. She can be reached at 1-310-923-1269 (direct), on SKYPE at Sharon.Drechsler or by email: Sharon@sharonink.com.

The Resort



The existence of a web-based database and search function provides significant value for resort entities that are concerned with the transfer of timeshare interval ownerships.

“Resort Trades, on the desk of every resort manager for over 25 years!

Dear owner: We love you!

by Sharon Drechsler-Scott, RRP
Executive Director, The Resort Academy

Sometimes we need to be reminded of what we're all doing here. Readers who operate a resort or work on-site at a timeshare resort may relate to my friend's experience. Let's call her Jane. She worked for many years in the resort industry until she finally was promoted to the position of general manager at a busy single-site Orlando project that was in active sales during her tenure.

Jane's first summer was peppered by all the issues that can arise at a busy property, from labor disputes to irrational guest complaints. (One particularly memorable event was occasioned by an irate exchange guest demanding a refund of his exchange fee because it rained all week!) We all have our war stories. This author remembers one particularly difficult experience involving a truly insane board member, who later committed suicide (no, fortunately, not on property).

After that summer, Jane was ready to call it quits. But every time she got ready to write her letter of resignation, she thought about the many owners with whom she had become friends. She realized that what she was doing – thankless though it seemed at times – was vital to their continuing to have good vacation experiences.

Now, after many years, she has come to take the challenges in stride. They are never-ending, but so are the rewards she receives when a HOA member recognizes her at a board meeting, or she gets a thank you note from one of her many “fans.”

So, what makes it all worthwhile? Why devote ourselves to a business that demands so much patience and dedication? On their website, VacationBetter.org, ARDA tells consumers, “Vacationing with timeshare is a way to invest in your family, and a way to invest in yourself by recharging every year. . . . Americans recognize vacations are much needed ‘sanity breaks’ to prevent burnout and stress.

But according to a recent study, many don't take all of their vacation time each year. Other studies point to increased stress levels, health risks and strained relationships as contributing factors from too much work and not enough vacation.”

As Kit Armour, RRP, president of The Armour Advantage says, “Think back to 9-11 and remember what happened to timeshare sales at that time... They jumped dramatically when compared to the travel industry as a whole. Yes, people were afraid to travel after 9-11. Yet, they were REALLY reminded of how precious time with your family and friends really is and timeshare is an exceptional and affordable way to make this happen.”

As she tells managers, “So, when you've gotten to the end of your rope and your knot is coming loose, remember what kind of an impact you can and are having on your owners and guests and their

families. You are helping to create some of their greatest memories that will stay with them for their entire lives. Chances are you're in this business because you're a people-person and you like to help people. Just keep that in your and your staffs' minds and find FUN ways to positively impact your owners' and guests' vacations. Have fun with them always and you will relieve lots of pressure from many different perspectives.”

Sure, there is a hope for financial gain when it comes to working in the industry. But there's a good reason why resort developers, managers and just about everyone involved are associated with the timeshare business, rather than in some other line of work. We enjoy the feeling of contributing to the health and well-being of our owners. Timeshare resorts provide a prepaid vacation that prompts owners/members to make time for themselves and their loved ones.

HOA news

Earlier this year, the American Resort Development Association Resort Owners' Coalition (ARDA-ROC) announced their support of a newly launched owner verification service called the Timeshare Transfer Registry (TTR), which has been developed by Grant Wolf Inc. Grant Wolf is an independent group of individuals that work collaboratively with management teams and companies and teams to provide a variety of services based on each client's needs.

The existence of a web-based database and search function provides significant value for resort entities that are concerned with the transfer of timeshare interval ownerships. Resorts that subscribe to the registry will be able to check up on companies requesting a Letter of Estoppel before releasing them.

The website also provides subscribers with valuable tips in an online whitepaper, “Best Estoppel Procedures and Practices.” Visit www.tregistry.com for more information and to subscribe to the site. It will be well worth your while. ARDA-ROC member HOAs that choose to subscribe to the TTR site will receive a discount on the monthly subscription fee.

In other news, the blog, legalaspirin.com/insights/blawg, recently reported that mandatory licensing for managers in Colorado was making its way through the state's governing bodies. The blog is authored by Dave Waller, an attorney formerly with Baker Hostetler, who is now head of Legal Aspirin (“the cure for the common lawyer”).

Waller notes that the House-sponsored bill had passed out of the state's House earlier and has now passed out of the Senate Local Government Committee before moving to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Waller provides further insights about how owners' associations (HOAs) and others will be affected in his “blawg.”





"Talking Timeshare" radio host Mark Silverman recently interviewed Eric Malloch, one of the founders of Timeshare Relief, which is possibly the biggest postcard or transfer company. When Silverman asked directly if Timeshare Relief knowingly places timeshare titles into LLC's that are then permitted to fail before paying maintenance fees, Malloch denied this categorically. David McMillan, the founder of the company joined the conversation as well. The two argued they are providing a valued service to owners who are no longer interested in keeping their timeshares and are unable to find a secondary market. To listen to the interview, visit <https://soundcloud.com/kenn-fong/talking-timeshare-s13-ep0508>.

At the April Timeshare Board Members Association (TBMA) Providence, R.I., meetings included HOA board members, resort managers and other industry professionals discussing solutions and resources for dealing with the many issues and challenges facing timeshare HOAs and their resorts' owners.

During an intensive two-and-a-half days of non-stop discussion, delegates from across the country discussed everything from transfer companies, unpaid maintenance fees and other financial issues to working successfully with management companies, vendors and other service suppliers. This author will most certainly plan to attend TBMA's October 28-30 meeting in Las Vegas. Information about TBMA can be found at www.tbmassoc.com or by email to: HOA@tstoday.com.

Another group focusing on owners is the Florida Timeshare Owners Group. According to the group's coordinator, Frank Debar, their next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 17, at the Palm Aire Country Club, Sarasota, Fla. Scheduled to speak are Woody Cary and Scott MacGregor, who often serve as consultants to timeshare HOA associations.

Cary will discuss future trends of the timeshare industry while MacGregor shares his insights about the expected changes in the "timeshare vacation experience," especially as to the direct impact these changes will have on all current timeshare owners. President and founder of the consumer resort review site, timeshareAdvisor.com, Suzanne Harris will talk about the benefits of this free web site to HOAs and resorts. Non-members are welcome to attend. Contact Frank Debar, at fdebar433@gmail.com for more information.

While on the subject of timeshareAdvisor.com, resort managers are beginning to get a lot of mileage out of this free site. Managers are going to the site to claim their resorts and enhance the 'Manager Tips' section. This is a list of over 25 questions to your visitors as they are making their vacation plans.

They cover just about everything a first-time, or maybe even a not-so-first-time, guest might want to know, including information about shopping, restaurants, kitchen utensils, your pet policy and more. Once you've improved your resort's selling points, encourage your happiest owners to leave their reviews and drive in some traffic to attract renters!

ANNOUNCING

Timeshare Resort Managers' Educational Resource Coming in 2013!

- Educational tools for learning at your own pace
- Webinars
- Study Materials
- Whitepapers
- Anthologies of Resort Management Articles Accumulated from Resort Trades' 23-year-old Archives

The Resort



www.ResortAcademy.org