

ATDSFL Champions of Learning Best Practices Submission Form

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Q1 Organization (as printed on certificate):

Atlantic Pacific Management

Q2 Project/Initiative Title:

A|PEERfect Coach

Q3 Name of Person Submitting:

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Q7 Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Please limit your response to between 150 and 200 words.

Atlantic Pacific Management is a real estate company that builds, acquires, renovates and manages multifamily, rental communities. A|PEERfect Coach program pairs high achieving, trained onsite coaches with new hires of the same or similar position. Positions coached are Maintenance Technician/Supervisor, Leasing Consultant, Assistant/Property Manager). Coaches guide new hires through their 90-day onboarding.

This project involved the corporate and volunteer onsite associates to develop a focused plan to onboard new associates based on their position's essential job duties. The initial onboarding had both hiring managers and the PEERfect Coaches responsible to guide the new associate through specific competencies. This coaching begins as hands-on, in-person coaching that takes place at multiple A|P communities.

After the Initial Onboarding Guide is completed, the coach works with the new associate with defined focus areas for the 30-, 60- and 90-day time periods. The coaches continue to meet in-person, but also utilize Zoom meeting technology as well as phone, text and email.

To become a coach, associates must be nominated, apply, interviewed and complete an assessment. Then, a committee of corporate employees gather 10 – 15 metrics on each candidate based on their job performance to determine who will be selected.

Q8 What was the business/organizational need that led to this initiative? Please limit your response to between 150 and 200 words.

A 90-day peer coaching, onboarding program call A|PEERfect Coach was developed to work towards the goals of increasing associates' retention and engagement, providing additional training support, shortening new hires' time to contribution and socializing people to the A|P Lifer culture.

Average turnover in the multifamily industry is 32% on an annual basis. However, given the rapid growth of the company (6 properties acquired and 1 in being built) turnover was becoming a major pain point. In 2018, the total turnover was at 79% for onsite staff and voluntary turnover was at 53%, much above the industry average.

Additionally, onboarding guides, though distributed to hiring managers prior to the programs existence were being utilized with varying degrees of completion and effectiveness. Property Managers were responsible to onboard associates, but often did not have the day-to-day knowledge to support specific positions or the skills to train them. Therefore, onboarding support was limited and may have fallen into the hands of unqualified associates who did not consistently communicate accurate information.

Finally, many associates come to A|P having previously worked in other companies in the industry. Having a coach as a resource provided a sounding board and someone to help smooth the cultural transition.

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Q9 What actions did you take that led to the success of this initiative? Please limit your response to between 400 and 500 words.

In order to get word out about the program and get buy in from those within the business, we invited a group of associates from various positions to be on a committee who provided input about the structure and design of the program. We met several times along with other communications to procure feedback.

Additionally, each corporate department reviewed the onboarding information to update it and enhance it. Research was done into similar corporate mentoring/coaching programs as well. In order to market the program several online, informational sessions that covered the selection and coaching assignment process were created. Coach nomination and applications were placed on the LMS. These documents, meetings and communications were branded based on the design scheme that the department had created.

A selection process was clearly defined and communicated including coach qualifications based on tenure and performance of essential job duties. Each coach had to be nominated by their immediate supervisor and regional manager, which included affirming that they met the qualifications and an explanation as to why they thought the person would be a great coach. A similar document was submitted by the applicant. Applicants then were interviewed by the Director of Training to assess their motivations, knowledge of resources, organizational skills, interpersonal skills and personal responsibility. Furthermore, candidates took an assessment hat was created collaboratively by the corporate associates. Finally, key performance indicators were pulled to assess the candidates job performance.

All of this information was brought together, and corporate associates selected who would be chosen as A|PEERfect Coaches. The number of coaches needed was assessed based on a previous 6 month hiring trend.

Once selected, coaches received an in-person training (in later rounds some were trained virtually). The training topics were: why coach?; program goals; benefits for the coaches; the coaching process; adult learning basics; learning modalities; a self-assessment of current coaching skills (MindTools); building rapport; coaching and listening skills; the A|P Lifer culture; dealing with performance issues; on-the-job training tips; and a hands on teaching activity to apply learned tactics.

The training was interactive and had many activities and discussions to provide practice and ensure skill development. At the end, all coaches received a branded bookbag, lapel pin, certificate, notepad and pen. Post training, the coaches meet quarterly to communicate updates, collaborate on successes and obstacles and reinforce good coaching and training habits.

Coaching assignments began to be paired with the attempt to keep coaches working with peers in his/her same role (sometimes one roll below was necessary). Matches were also made based on geography to facilitate the in-person meetings.

During assignments, the training department would receive communications from the coaches for the initial onboarding as well as a 30-, 60- and 90- day report. The training department also worked with hiring managers and regionals managers on an as needed basis to ensure the assignments were given the best chance to succeed.

Once an assignment is completed, graduating associates receive a certificate and feedback survey.

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Q10 What outcomes resulted from your initiative and how did you measure them? Please limit your response to between 250 and 300 words.

One of the main metrics followed was employee retention and the associated turnover costs. For short-term 90-day onboarding success, those with coaches were retained from May 2018 to April 2019 at 72% (38% turnover), while those without coaches were at 67% (33% turnover) a 5% increase.

Preparing associates during their onboarding proved for even more impressive longer-term retention as associates with coaches hired between May 2018 and April 2019 were retained at 66% (34% turnover) while those without coaches were retained at 55% (45% turnover) a retention increase of 11%. When considering from 1/1/18 to 12/31/18 the organization's overall retention for onsite employees was at 21%, the company's improvement was very impressive.

When calculating annual turnover costs based on McKinsey & Company research that looked at several studies, we utilized the conservative estimate of turnover cost being 50% of the associate's annual salary. With this data, and the average salary onsite at \$40,000, the company saved \$167,123.29 with a monetary ROI of \$152,918.96 (minus expense of coaching bonuses paid), or 1,076%.

Additionally, recognizing and engaging our high performers with the coaching role resulted in an annual retention rate of 87% for coaches including 8 of 49 being promoted during the year (16% of coaches).

Those who graduated A|PEERfect Coach program were surveyed. 82% of respondents rated the program a 10 out of 10. Also, when asked if they would recommend her/his coach to another associate, 73% of respondents strongly agreed and 18% agreed.

Much of developing talent starts with the onboarding process, and the results found that when A|PEERfect Coach worked with a new associate it returned both short-term and long-term success of the associate. Finally, many of the coaches are developing the skills necessary to be promoted and take on leadership roles within the company.

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Q11 What information would be vital for other organizations to know if they wanted to replicate your initiative? Please limit your response to between 250 and 300 words.

Coordinate with key leaders and front-line associates to engage them in the program development and ensure the the onboarding process is comprehensive.. These people will help spread information about the program and provide valuable feedback. Additionally, when people at all levels of the business provide their thoughts, there is greater buy in from a change management standpoint.

Show executive support. Include messages from executives in informational meetings, throughout marketing of the program and during the training sessions.

Create a branding theme that people will come to recognize and a lexicon that will be commonly used. Then, overcommunicate and market in multiple modes such as videos, online meetings, LMS announcements and resources, email, recorded interviews, case studies, word-of-mouth, etc.

Choose quality coaches. We quickly found that we needed more coaches. However, we did not give in and choose less qualified coaches simply because of the demand. Stay true to the belief that the program is only as good as those doing the coaching. Once those coaches are selected, continue to support them with updates on policy changes, continuous training and one-on-one coaching from the training department.

Live with the scale up growing pains. We had to communicate clearly with regional and hiring managers that we would always try our best to match a coach with every new hire. When this couldn't be done, hiring managers retained the responsibility to onboard the associates (although they had new resources created for the program to do so).

Utilize technology to track and gain he ability to scale. Technology can limit low-level administrative work and make time for higher-value consultation and feedback to hiring managers, coaches and new associates.

Finally, if given the opportunity, beta test the program on a smaller scale in order to make changes that will enhance it.
