



Executive of the Month: As president of AKAM, Michael Rogoff is bringing hospitality-led services to NYC properties

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New York, NY The New York Real Estate Journal (NYREJ) recently sat down with Michael Rogoff for a question and answer session. Rogoff is the president of AKAM.

AKAM is one of the leading real estate management firms serving the Greater New York area and South Florida. Established in 1983 on the premise of shifting the mindset within the industry, AKAM is recognized for their highly personalized, attentive, hospitality-led service designed for an enriched customer experience. AKAM's work is supported by deep knowledge and expertise in the field, and best-in-class talent in hospitality, management, finance & planning, architecture, and related disciplines to elevate and enhance the value of your real estate asset.

AKAM is committed to shifting the mindset within the industry offering a highly personalized, hospitality-led residential experience.

NYREJ: How do you create a service experience that is unique to each property?

Rogoff: The key to cultivating a phenomenal service experience is personalizing services that are tailored to each individual, which is the philosophy behind AKAM's latest initiative. We are focused on elevating the level of service within our properties and as a leading property management firm managing approximately 350 properties across the tri-state area and South Florida, we draw from hospitality offered in the top hotels across the globe and implement this nature of experience into every property we serve across our portfolio.

The different touch points we experience living in a property on a daily basis – from the lobby entrance and amenities to actually living in your building – should be emotional, special and memorable. That is why AKAM has made it a priority to develop a type of offering that taps into those elements in a way that has not been done before, and really deliver something exceptional.

Going beyond simple aesthetics and amenities, it is important to customize every element of the lifestyle within a property, inside and out, and engage all senses. Every detail is imperative, from the music that is playing in the lobby, to the tone of lighting in various common areas and even signature scents. A good hospitality-led experience anticipates the needs of the occupants, much like a perfectly tailored suit.

NYREJ: How can a property be transformed to provide this level of hospitality-forward service?

Rogoff: It all starts with careful training and a hospitality mindset. The demeanor and professionalism of every team member is super critical, so it is important to identify the people who can rise to the levels that are needed. Specialized training in elevated service touch points is also part of the process. How should we open the door? How can impressions and appearance be enhanced? Every interaction is considered, even the greetings and language used by the front desk staff—do they speak in a way that embodies the luxury of the property? The property's general manager must ensure that high standards of hospitality training and key learnings are reinforced daily.

If a building does not have a high level of service and staff in place, or is looking to make improvements, this can be turned around and reconceived through proper training and resources. It is about following up with residents and owners consistently and engaging in meaningful conversations and exchanges. Find out what they need, which will help identify gaps and train your existing team to fill them.

AKAM is the new paradigm for property management.

NYREJ: What is the best way to handle this kind of transition and training process, and ensure the experience is unique but also consistent across all properties?

Rogoff: The level of elevation we want to achieve is not an overnight process. Once we identify gaps, we need to create a plan to meet them, and measure the success of this plan every few months. Be critical in analyzing if the goals are being attained and establish key performance indicators to ensure they are consistently achieved and even exceeded.

When training staff in a new way, you may face resistance to some of these changes. Communicating clear messaging about the benefits of these new facets of service and expectations to staff, residents, and the Board will help manage this. Make sure that everyone understands how these efforts will benefit them in terms of the pride in the building, increased property values, higher quality of life and more.

Personalized luxury service is the key to creating a property where everyone wants to live. AKAM's expertise in the field of hospitality service at the highest levels is reshaping the property management industry to deliver that next level of service and experience, one building at a time. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to this because each building is very different, with varying demographics, but keeping the open lines of communication and keeping up a dynamic training program is essential.

Ultimately, it all boils down to the people, and our team at AKAM is proof of that. Recruiting and retaining committed staff who share the same hospitality-first philosophy is the secret behind the success.

AKAM's dynamic team includes experts in the fields of hospitality, management, finance, architecture, sustainability, and more.

NYREJ: What is your outlook for the future of real estate management and its approach to service in major metropolitan markets, and how does this touch of hospitality add value to a property?

Rogoff: In such highly competitive markets, we work very closely with our clients to ensure the value of their investments are not only protected but enhanced and maximized. We are keen on providing not only the best service, but bringing it to the next level, supported by our specialized, in-house staff in key service areas. We approach all things with an eye towards the future and as one of the largest organically grown property management companies out there, our reputation and recent growth really underlines the type of value we bring to our properties.