

## Case Study: People matter in property management

by Lisa East

When it comes to knowing what matters in property management, Iron Bridge Senior Property Manager Michelle Docherty certainly has first-hand experience. Michelle is an Iron Bridge landlord client, as well as a Property Manager employee, so the proof certainly is in the pudding for her, and she firmly believes the personal Iron Bridge service is a step ahead.



People pleasing is one of the essentials of the property management role, she says. Luckily enough, that's one of her favourite parts of her job (that, and having fun). As she says, "A job's got to be fun, or else what's the point?"

Michelle should know – when it came to her interview for the role, she says she interviewed Iron Bridge probably more than they interviewed her. And it has paid off for Michelle, who has been with Iron Bridge for five years now and loves being part of growing the business with the Iron Bridge family.

Working in property management previously, Michelle knew she was looking for something different in her new role. "The property management structure was very important to me," she says, after coming from a prior role that used a portfolio style of property management. This means the property manager is in charge of every aspect of the rental management – contact with owner, tenants, letting properties, inspections, even paying rents to the owner. "Because you're the only one with the property knowledge you're on call 24/7 and it's very easy to get burnt out."

The pod property management system at Iron Bridge is a different approach that works really well, says Michelle. Instead of one person taking over all duties for a property and tenants, a senior property manager is paired with a tenant property manager, and together they look after a 'pod' of properties. The senior property manager liaises with the owners and looks after property maintenance, while the tenant property manager takes care of tenant needs, checking rental arrears and other administration.

"It's a pairing that works – it means there's always another party who knows the details of your properties and tenants," something that doesn't often happen in other property management setups. There's a lot of transparency in the Iron Bridge system with Property Management General Manager Pam Marshall regularly reviewing the management pods' records and working with them to ensure nothing slips below the radar in terms of property or client care.

"The pod setup and team structure mean we're all in the know and can assist our clients with real answers no matter whether their particular property manager is unavailable. It's a better service for our owners and tenants – answers when they need them."

Michelle owns rental properties herself so understands the need for clear answers, and fast. That's one of Michelle's philosophies – to get back to her clients immediately. It's also part of the [Iron Bridge service guarantee](#) – your call will be returned within four business hours. Michelle believes that [service guarantee](#) is the clear difference between Iron Bridge and any other property management service.

Robust systems and processes are also key aspects in the level of service Iron Bridge provides and Michelle's love of checklists and procedures align very nicely – it's about accountability for all involved, she says.

Trying to please all parties is a big part of the job, says Michelle, and it's a tough job at times. “We work in a problem solving environment – the days where you help the owner and the tenant find a mutually agreed arrangement are very satisfying indeed.”

“I have rental properties myself and know that we manage all our rental properties as if they're our own – really, we do” says Michelle. “People choose us for our quality service every time.”

**Want to know more about what makes Iron Bridge Property Management different? Take a look at [our services](#). If you're looking for a team to take real care of your rental property in Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch, [give us a call](#).**