

# Aren Bazzocco on Sacramento's evolution and the power of engagement



**Aren Bazzocco**  
Division  
President  
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Calif.

In 2015, at age 37, Aren Bazzocco became Taylor Morrison's youngest division president. He was an accountant before jumping into the world of home building, and after a stint with Pulte Homes, he landed with his current employer and has worked as VP of finance for almost eight years. A restructuring of Taylor Morrison's Northern California division opened the door for Bazzocco to become the leader of the Sacramento unit where he oversees five operational VPs, 75 division employees, and 17 active communities. The division has since grown from being the 8th largest in Sacramento, in terms of market share, to becoming the No. 2 builder there, with more than 500 sales annually.

**Q** Some have deemed Sacramento unknown or misunderstood, since outsiders consider the state capital a government and military town. What's been happening there lately?

**A** I was born and raised here in Sacramento, and I've seen the region's ups and downs firsthand. It's been exciting to see how the city has worked to reposition itself as more than just a government town. And since the downturn, it has emerged as America's Farm-to-Fork capital, with a solid job

base in health care, hospitality, and technology. I've really been impressed with the revitalized downtown centered around the new Kings arena [that is, the Golden 1 Center, home of the NBA's Sacramento Kings]. The urban infill living opportunities and relative affordability—along with the abundance of recreation and a centralized location in the middle of the Bay Area, Napa, and Lake Tahoe—makes Sacramento an increasingly desirable place to live, and people are really starting to take notice.

**Q** Taylor Morrison's Sacramento division has scored high in employee engagement surveys for worker satisfaction. What are you and your managers doing to keep employees so engaged?

**A** We are firm believers in servant leadership, and our management team carries out that philosophy every day. By putting the team first and ourselves second, we've created a positive environment that encourages collaboration, communication, and respect. All of our employees know that they can walk into my office with any question or issue and I will do everything I can to help.

We're also very careful when bringing new team members onboard, with character and personality carrying significant weight in the hiring process; you can never teach integrity or charisma. We live the company's core values and place caring above all else—caring for our teams, our trade partners and customers, and our families and the communities where we live and build.

The entire Sacramento team is incredibly passionate, experienced, and empowered, and I have complete trust in every person, allowing him or her flexibility and giving them the support to do their best work.

**Q** Taylor Morrison has been soliciting opinions through a Facebook survey to find out what amenities would be attractive for its next 55-plus community in Sacramento. Is this the first time the company has used Facebook to gather such input, and how is that effort faring? Any surprises in responses so far?

**A** We have used Facebook in other markets for quick one-question surveys, but this particular survey was much more involved. The volume of responses has been overwhelming, so it's a practice we will definitely continue in the future.

Our consumers are highly engaged and eager to be consulted in the planning of this community. So, when we get to product development, we will be sure to include them in focus groups and further studies. Again, the volume of responses was a bit of a surprise, given the length of the survey, as well as the level of engagement, not only from Sacramento respondents but also from the Bay Area and Southern California. Respondents prioritized staying active outdoors with year-round living spaces, indoor-outdoor connectivity, and a resort-style clubhouse focused on fitness and social activities.

For the complete interview with Aren Bazzocco, see [probuilder.com/bazzocco](http://probuilder.com/bazzocco).