



Managing Today's Condo: **Success in the 21st Century**

“The world we all live in is changing almost on a daily basis and the corporations and communities we manage are no different. We can all learn from each other and if this profession is going to prosper then those who profess to know how and have been practising for so long will need to adapt.”

By Harold Cipin, RCM



MEET GEORGE Jetson Jr. III, a young and inspired new RCM. As a young energetic professional in the Canadian condominium management field George is eager to establish himself in an industry that has been dominated by others old enough to be his parents, or even his grandparents! But his ACOM educational courses will undoubtedly serve him well; he just needs time and the opportunity to gain more experience. In his mind though there seems to be a disconnect between the way he has been “taught” to manage the corporation he undertook a few months ago, and the way he thinks it should be managed.

Our universe has become so much smaller this past decade: instant communication, face time, Facebook, blogs and tweets! With the incredible advances made within the social media domain our ability to communicate needed to, and has, kept pace. So has the ability to man-

age condominium corporations by incorporating many of these newly developed tools to assist with the day-to-day tasks managers are expected to deal with.

■ Be Part of Today's Future Not an Archive of the Past

Our world has also become much smarter! Young children, persons with seniority and the regular working class all have the opportunity and moreover the ability to retrieve information instantaneously and therefore expand their knowledge base to unprecedented levels. Property managers today must take advantage of these opportunities and learning centres to expand their working knowledge of the condominium world. Today's manager does work smarter and embraces the cutting edge technology that is readily available.

George is delighted! He is a member of the now generation and is completely in tune with the latest technology. He is excited that

he can now incorporate his world into the condo world he works at every day. He now has been able to synchronize his iPad with his desktop computer as well as to his cell phone so that he can instantaneously retrieve any piece of information on the corporation with the tap of a computer key from anywhere he happens to be. Individual unit files and related history, contracts, the corporation's documentation including bylaws and rules, as well as dates and costs related to projects identified in the Reserve Fund Study are all available with the press of a button!

His board of directors meetings are now far more efficient and less time consuming, not to mention far more environmentally friendly since the need for paper reproduction has been virtually eliminated! His reports including the monthly unaudited financial statements are all sent electronically to the board members in advance of the meeting. Directors arrive at the board meeting well read and well prepared!

The software program, which was made available to George, has added immeasurably to his overall effectiveness. His ability to communicate with all residents has been greatly enhanced as has the various mediums George has been able to utilize within the building. Television monitors have been installed in the mail room and behind the concierge's desk. Residents are now better able to familiarize themselves with ongoing programs and communiques in the building, become instantly aware of packages or parcels which have been left for them and remain constantly updated on various projects currently underway within the building. And let's not forget about the corporation's new website which provides additional information that residents can access on their own computer or television set! All of this from the friendly confines of George's office. Unfortunately he still has to get out of the office to complete his building inspections and review the work of the various

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Consumers' expectations are also changing – even the ones buying into or living in condominiums. Once an email is written and sent the expectation is that a reply is issued immediately. George gets it and because he is “wired in” he can provide that response from any place at any time...no problem! Time for today's young condo residents doesn't stand still and therefore today's manager and the ones coming into the industry in the near future have to keep up. The expectation is now, not tomorrow or the next day! The technology is here and it will even get better and more sophisticated in the years to come.

The world we all live in is changing almost on a daily basis and the corporations and communities we manage are no different. We can all learn from each other and if this profession is going to prosper then those who profess to know how and have been practising for so long will need to adapt. Someone once said that the more things change the more they stay the same! I'm not sure anymore if that adage still rings true!

The Registered Condominium Manager (RCM) is now a nationally acclaimed and recognized designation. Many believe that the Ontario Government's current process to amend its legislation and add licensing for managers will provide added protection for its consumers and at the same time strengthen the profession. Time will tell but in the meantime the future is now! I for one commend George and the many others like him for leading the way into the 21st century. ■

Harold Cipin, RCM is president of Times Property Management, an ACMO 2000 certified company, and president of the National Association of Condominium Managers (NACM).

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