



Condo Managers — Nobody Does It Better!

By Harold S. Cipin, MSc, BA(Hon), RCM

THIS winter issue of *Condominium Manager* has undertaken to profile condominium management! What a novel concept! Condominium management from both the managers' and board's perspective, and dealing with all of the stresses associated with the day-to-day challenges as well as the ethical and political aspects that have become even more prevalent today.

But through it all, the one dominant theme is the human perspec-

tive! Yes, we manage buildings, new and old, and yes, each building has a personality unique unto itself. In the final analysis though, what or more appropriately, who we truly manage is people! From boards of directors to tradespeople and suppliers, from residents to on-site personnel – we are in the people business and the expectations that have been placed upon us to manage all of these groups effectively and professionally has grown immensely over the years.

Condominium managers today must be knowledgeable and “in tune” with the human side of management. People come first! Understanding different customs and cultures, the stresses of first time buyers and how

to resolve conflict are just a few of the human elements we all deal with daily. How we as managers conduct ourselves each and every day is paramount to our success! People managing people, today at expectation levels never seen before!

As our industry continues to achieve unprecedented growth, the people charged with the responsibility of managing these ever changing structures will be at the helm. The articles that follow are intended to provide some valuable insight to assist all of us to meet those unprecedented expectations! Are we up for the challenge? I believe we are because, frankly, no one can do it better!

Cheers!■

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How to be a Great Condominium Manager

By Harold S. Cipin, MSc, BA(Hon), RCM

EVERYBODY thinks that it is easy to manage a condominium. Well, if that was the case, why is it so difficult to find managers, especially great ones? The truth is that it is not that easy and the responsibilities and expectations placed upon managers today continue to escalate at an unprecedented rate! So how do we become great managers?



To be a great manager one must commit to a career that has no definitive limits of time. You must be available everyday, at all hours (either in person or by telephone), possess a willingness to continually expand your knowledge base and above all enjoy working with people – all kinds of people!

■ The Three Keys to Greatness

There are three major characteristics that set the great manager apart from all the others. Knowledge, leadership, and pride and ownership constitute the parameters that measure the level of respect the great managers receive from their client boards and communities that others only wish they could achieve.

Let's start with knowledge. Most managers have sitting on a shelf or buried in a drawer a copy of the *Condominium Act*, the corporation's declaration, bylaws and regulations, various codes (building, fire, health and safety), the reserve fund study and perhaps even some administrative policies and procedures. But it is the great managers who have these documents readily accessible, who reference them on a daily basis, who bring them to board and committee meetings and who read them with regularity just to be refreshed.

Leadership! Great managers clearly understand that they must assume a leadership role to maximize their effectiveness as a manager because that is what is expected of them. Regardless of the source, the management company, the client board, the staff, the contractors or the residents, the great managers lead! That is the expectation. These are the managers who take the time to provide proper training and supervision to all who require it, not just in passing, but with forethought and compassion. These are the individuals who take the time to prepare required policies and procedures and see that they are properly implemented. These are the managers who take the time to review all of the corporation's contracts and prepare a contract summary database. Great managers are proactive not reactive.

The third major characteristic is that of pride and ownership. Establishing a standard of care that can only be equalled and not surpassed demonstrates another quality that identifies a great manager. Treating the property as if it were your own, interacting with the residents as if they were like family and friends, and taking the time to see that the job has been completed to your satisfaction also separates the great manager from all the others.

In the fall 2003 issue of *Condominium Manager*, then president, Laura Lee, in her inaugural column wrote about the five key qualities successful managers must possess: 1. Common sense; 2. Professionalism; 3. Flexibility; 4. Time management; and 5. Resourcefulness. Excellent advice to be sure. However, great managers are successful because they incorporate



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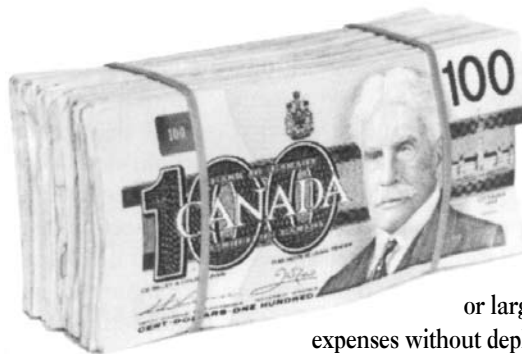
these traits into their daily routines. They are organized yet they can adapt to change on a moment's notice.

Great managers embark upon a mission with a vision to succeed! They understand the value in building relationships and partnerships, for it is these relationships that solidify the very framework required for success! Great managers do not work alone. Great managers take the time to build a team that can work together, that can achieve the goals and objectives that the manager and the team have set for themselves. Yes, great managers share the successes as well as the failures!

Great managers are not born but rather they are created out of a self-fulfilling need to be the best – a need that will enhance and enlighten all that are a part of our world! There are no restrictions or limitations as to how many great managers our industry can accept; it is only that commitment to knowledge, leadership and pride that must be made!■

Harold S. Cipin, MSc, BA(Hons), RCM, is president of Times Property Management Inc. He is in his second term as president of ACMO's board of directors. He can be reached at 905-882-4275.

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