



An **Associa**® Company

CONDO CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

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Message from the President

Get Your Community Ready for Summer

At Wilson Blanchard, we work hard every day to make sure your condominium community runs well so you can focus on what really matters. We hope you take the opportunity this summer to get outside and enjoy your community with the friends, family, and neighbours that make it so special.

Need ideas to make the most of the season? We have you covered! From tips on how to increase homeowner participation in your community (and how to keep the peace with neighbours while doing so!) to ideas about how your community can help the environment by going green, we've curated our most popular articles to help you bring more beauty, fun, and engagement to your condo this summer.

And if you're looking for even more content, remember to follow us on social media. You can subscribe to receive instant notifications of postings on our website (<https://www.wilsonblanchard.com/blog/>) and additional weekly content is posted and shared on our Twitter feed (https://twitter.com/wb_condo) including recent articles on:

- The Unexpected Dangers of Bird Nests Near Your Home
- Can I BBQ on my Condo Balcony?
- Reserve Fund Planning – Not as Simple as it Seems
- To Borrow or Not to Borrow? How Does the Process Work: Borrowing By-laws
- And many more...

We wish you a happy and healthy summer and hope that you are able to find some time to sit back, relax and enjoy some sunnier days!

**Sincerely,
Brad Wells**

President – Wilson Blanchard Management Inc., An Associa® Company

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5 WAYS

TO INCREASE HOMEOWNER PARTICIPATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

As a board member, you're responsible for keeping homeowners engaged, so it's no surprise that apathy is a topic that our condo managers and leadership team members receive many questions about and one that we discuss on the blog often. Increasing engagement in your community is possible, and after 40 years of working with communities, we have accumulated some tried and true methods of getting the job done. Here are our top 5 ways to increase homeowner participation in your community.

1. WELCOME AND EDUCATE NEW HOMEOWNERS.

While most owners take pride in their homes and do anything they can to protect them, many homeowners struggle to see the bigger picture of living in a condo. You can help change this by educating homeowners from day one on the benefits of living in a condo community. Once homeowners fully understand the impact an association can have positively (or negatively) on their property value, they are much more likely to become committed volunteers to protect their investment. The sooner the education process begins, the sooner they become active. Take the time to welcome all new homeowners into the community by acknowledging their new arrival. These new owners are typically excited about their new homes and it's the perfect time to educate them about community and to get them involved!

2. GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE.

From the newest neighbour to the neighbourhood old-timers, everyone should have an opportunity to participate. Committees are an excellent way to share some responsibilities and get more homeowners involved on their terms. It is important to gather input

from the entire community and see what types of activities and interests your board should pursue. An annual meeting is a perfect time to gather ideas and to gauge people's interest levels.

COMMITTEES COULD INCLUDE:

- Neighborhood Welcome Committee
- Social & Event Committee
- Landscape Committee
- Homeowner Education Committee
- Neighborhood Watch Committee
- Finance & Budget Committee
- Contract Review Committee

3. RECOGNIZE YOUR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS OFTEN.

After you and your board have worked hard to increase participation, don't let your efforts go to waste. Frequently recognize and publicly acknowledge the efforts of your community volunteers. Take time out at your board meetings to highlight the achievements of your committees and other volunteers. Publicly thanking them for their efforts is not just the right thing to do, but it will increase engagement and gratitude across your community.

4. CELEBRATE AND HAVE FUN TOGETHER.

If you want more homeowners to get out and meet their neighbours, focus on creating events that people want to attend. There are endless opportunities to create memorable events that will get people out of their home and increase community participation. After you form a social committee, have them come up with two or three event ideas. Holiday BBQs or decorating parties, or even a neighbourhood recipe exchange can be a great place to start, but create something that makes sense for your community. Establishing an annual event can create something fun to look forward to and will allow you to build excitement year after year.

5. USE TECHNOLOGY TO STAY CONNECTED.

Technology continues to change how we interact, and our local communities are no different. The truth is most people are doing the bulk of their social interaction on a screen, so instead of fighting against this modern reality, we suggest your community begins to adapt. Your condo should look into technology solutions that can help connect neighbours and increase participation.



LIVING IN YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S BACKYARD?

Here's How to Keep the Peace

If you've visited a newer neighbourhood recently, you may have noticed that yards are getting smaller and houses are getting closer together. Whether it's because homeowners don't want to manage the maintenance and upkeep that comes with having a large yard, or developers are trying to make better use of their space, the small yard trend seems to be here to stay. Unfortunately, with this newfound popularity comes a different set of issues for both homeowners and condo communities alike.

What issues can a small backyard cause?

While many people may not consider the size of a yard to be a factor when purchasing a home, it's important to be aware of the issues that could arise if the backyard is small. Noise complaints – like loud music, dogs barking, or children playing – tend to be the most common issues. These loud noises cause a distraction and can be disruptive to the time you spend enjoying your own backyard.

How can you keep the peace?

When issues arise between neighbours, most people tend to avoid taking the confrontational route and instead let their association handle the problem by sending a letter to the resident at fault. Unfortunately, this could create a bigger problem, because in most cases, the violator knows exactly who initiated the letter and tensions could rise. The following are three ways you can keep the peace, so situations don't get out of hand.

1. Meet your neighbours.

In the "old days," it was customary to welcome a new family to the neighbourhood by stopping by with a sweet treat. Revive that tradition and get to know who lives around you.

Say hello at the mailbox or connect on a community platform to meet your neighbours and start your relationship on the right foot before any issues arise.

2. Be neighbourly.

After you meet your neighbours, you should continue to build that relationship by being neighbourly. Being neighbourly doesn't have to be complicated – it's as simple as offering to pick up your neighbour's newspaper or keeping an eye on their home while they're out of town.

3. Work together to resolve issues.

If you have a strong relationship with your neighbours, it's easier to work together to resolve issues. For example, if your neighbour's children are staying outside late to play, and they know you have to wake up early for work, they'll be more likely to work with you to find a compromise. Remember, you should always address issues face-to-face and be open to all sides.

What can you do if relationships are strained?

If you've already tried speaking with your neighbours, and they're ignoring your requests, you can seek other avenues to resolve your issues. Keep in mind that rules do exist for a reason – so getting your association involved is an option, or you can contact a city compliance officer. While many people take these measures immediately, it's recommended that they're used as a last resort because having a strained relationship with someone who lives ten feet away is never good. If you do your best to build a relationship with your neighbours, it'll be easy to keep the peace while living in each other's backyards.



How Green is Your Community?

At Associa, we're committed to supporting our client communities' efforts to become more sustainable and decrease their environmental impact. Every year, Associa Green recognizes Associa-managed communities that demonstrate their "green" efforts with the Associa Green Seal and awards one community that goes above and beyond with their green initiatives with the Associa Green Award. We gathered the best ideas from our green communities and are sharing our top 10 tips for how your community can go green.

- ❑ **Install energy-efficient bulbs such as LEDs or CFLs for indoor and outdoor lighting.**
- ❑ **Adopt a lights off/power down policy for common facilities when not in use.**
- ❑ **Increase your energy efficiency by installing solar panels or other passive solar elements**
- ❑ **Go paperless by changing to electronic delivery of your Board packages, financial statements and completing the Ontario Condo Act's Agreement to Receive Notices Electronically**
- ❑ **Install electric vehicle charging stations.**
- ❑ **Create a community garden and include local flowers to attract pollinators.**
- ❑ **Host a locally-sourced farmer's market.**
- ❑ **Offer curbside recycling or designated recycling drop-off locations, and always encourage the proper disposal of hazardous wastes.**
- ❑ **Collect organics and yard debris for composting and other beneficial uses.**
- ❑ **Create green community education measures such as e-newsletter articles and workshops or programs to cover topics including drought-resistant landscape choices to minimize water usage, and organic and natural options for pest and weed control.**

Implementing any of these suggestions is a great way to start minimizing your environmental impact, but imagine if we all went about our daily lives living in a green way – doing things and making everyday choices that are kinder to the earth.

“Operating in a ‘green way’ is the way we do things rather than having a separate vision just to be green.”

– Piney Orchard Community Association,
2018 Associa Green Award Winner



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