



Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. – Your Solution to Property Management
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Training & Education

By Karen Reynolds & Jeff Lack, Co-Editors

The WB Condo Connection is a newsletter intended to highlight Ontario condominium related articles and educational items that may be of interest to Boards of Directors and condo owners.

In this issue we have highlighted the training and education of our managers and the RCM – Registered Condominium Manager – designation by expanding on a speech that was given by Karen Reynolds at the recent CCI Golden Horseshoe Chapter Conference in Hamilton.

Our newsletter is published online and available on our website (www.wilsonblanchard.com) as well as in hard copy format to each of the members of our Boards of Directors.

The Added Value of a Well Trained Manager / Management Team

By Karen Reynolds, ACCI, FCCI, R.C.M., A.I.H.M.
Director of Property Management

Education. Information about or training in a particular subject. The dictionary perfectly depicts why education is a priority at Wilson, Blanchard. We introduce our manager trainees into the company working under the close supervision of our Manager of Training and insist they immediately enrol in the condominium management courses available. Our expectation of all property managers at WB is the achievement and maintenance of the RCM (Registered Condominium Manager) designation as a

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As always, we hope you enjoy this edition and we welcome your comments. Please direct any comments, suggestions or article topic requests by email to newsletter.editor@wilsonblanchard.com or by mail to:

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minimum. But the sky is the limit for our managers or any of our staff. If an employee takes an industry related course or a course relative to their position in the company and passes it, the company reimburses them 100%.

You might ask why we have chosen to relay this information to you in our newsletter. Well, we recognize how busy you are and perhaps your manager’s education or credentials are things you haven’t really given much thought to. But, would you hire someone to service the HVAC system in your building who wasn’t certified or employ your

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brother-in-law who knows “a little something” about plumbing to replace the risers? Probably not. Likewise when your vehicle requires repair, do you take it to a licensed mechanic? Of course you do. So, like us, you obviously recognize the importance of utilizing properly trained/educated trades and professionals to resolve your problems and having a manager assigned to your corporation who has been thoroughly trained or who possesses his/her RCM designation or is at least working toward it, in our mind, is exactly along those same lines. Especially when you consider that individual could potentially be managing assets which might easily equate to a million dollars or more.

Peace of mind. Confidence. Those are two of the valuable benefits a corporation receives when working with a trained manager or better yet, an RCM. Other advantages that come to mind are economic value, improved lifestyle and asset protection.

We say this because any manager holding his/her RCM designation has achieved a minimum of two years' experience in condominium management in addition to having successfully completed a comprehensive educational program through ACMO (Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario) consisting of courses relating to the administration, financial management and



physical management of a condominium. Among other things, managers learn about condominium structures and operating systems in the physical management curriculum, how to deal with emergencies and proper communication with trades and professionals.

The financial course prepares managers for creating budgets, collections, interpreting financial statements and assisting their corporations to operate in a fiscally responsible manner. All key components to property management. Of greatest benefit though, is the course specifically covering condominium legislation. The condominium law course material includes not only the Condominium Act but also familiarizes the manager with corporation documents as well as any other acts relevant to the condominium industry such as Human Rights and Occupational Health and Safety. All course content is reviewed regularly by ACMO and the courses are taught by specialists in the condominium field allowing candidates to gain an appreciation of condominium issues from those with personal experience. These courses, in addition to the continuing education offered through ACMO and our own in-house seminars, help to eliminate inconsistency in the quality of management services provided to our clients while improving the general knowledge base of our managers.

Not only do our managers possess the knowledge required to manage the day to day affairs of your corporation but you and your owners can feel confident that your assets are being managed by an honest, trustworthy individual with professional integrity. Corporations are reassured with the knowledge their manager will benefit from continued in-house education as well as support from their peers. And of equal importance is the

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board's ability to place their confidence in the credibility, morality and honesty of the manager who must work within the guidelines of the ACMO code of ethics when their manager is an RCM.

The ACMO code of Professional Ethics defines what is acceptable behaviour and provides the Ethics committee, comprising RCM's, with a guideline to assess whether or not a claim is justified. On the one hand, it seems unfortunate there is a need for a Code of Professional Ethics or an Ethics Committee but on the other hand, doesn't the fact that a code exists induce all of us to perform with integrity and provide assurance to our clients that they can feel confident entrusting us with their investment?

These guidelines ensure we are all accountable for our actions as a process has been implemented in the event a breach is suspected whereby complainants must complete a form outlining the details of the breach for submission to the ACMO office. Once there, each complaint received is held in strictest confidence and forwarded to the Ethics Committee for review to determine whether a breach has occurred and if further investigation is required. If no violation has taken place, the complainant is notified in writing by ACMO's Executive Director; if however, it appears the complaint has substance, then a thorough investigation process is initiated.

During the investigation information is collected from the complainant as well as the parties named and both sides are reviewed by the committee. The process may also involve recruiting statements from witnesses and when necessary, legal input is sought for advice or clarification.

"Our expectation of all property managers at WB is the achievement and maintenance of the RCM designation as a minimum."

Once the committee has satisfied themselves that all information has been presented, the details are given consideration and a course of action is determined. Perhaps after researching the complaint, the committee determines a breach has not occurred after all. In that case, as noted above, all parties would be issued written notification of the committee's decision.

On the other hand, should it be determined that the individual has been involved in or exhibited inappropriate behaviour, the named party would receive written communication with clear instruction to improve their behaviour. If the direction is ignored or if warranted, the committee may refer the matter to an independently appointed Discipline Committee to be addressed and that decision could be made public.

From start to finish it may take several months for any complaint to reach resolution and during that time, the committee meets regularly to review any new material received. The delay may be frustrating for all parties involved however as a company who promotes the RCM, it reassures us that all complaints whether frivolous or justified are completely and thoroughly investigated and followed through to resolution.

Knowing this system is in place should also provide comfort to our board members and enable you to more readily accept the advice of your manager. We understand volunteering on a

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condominium board can be a difficult and thankless job as owners are not always receptive to decisions made by the board especially when it affects their own personal finances, even if they will benefit in the long run. Working with a trained professional is considerably less painful for you as volunteers as better trained managers are more prepared to help guide the board as they make those difficult decisions, they are more credible when delivering the conclusion to the owners and they are well equipped to handle any repercussions from the owners.

Unit owners also receive benefit from having an RCM to work with. The corporation represents their home and what could potentially be the largest investment of their lives. Having a competent and capable individual available that they can contact to address maintenance issues relating to their unit, their quiet enjoyment of their home or issues with their common element fees is paramount. Owners know the manager will respect their rights and resolve their issues quickly and efficiently and, just as importantly, owners can be confident they will be treated in a professional and respectful manner. A properly trained and knowledgeable manager is more capable of addressing issues in a timely and effective manner thereby reducing inconvenience to owners. Through their calm and confident behaviour, many managers are able to instill peace of mind to owners even when those owners are dealing with problems that might appear insurmountable.

Unit owners' lifestyles are positively impacted by a manager who is diligent in the maintenance of their property because a well-maintained corporation with a healthy financial position is not only a more comfortable living environment for them but also helps ensure real estate values

are maximized.

Our boards can feel confident that the interaction their manager is having with their contractors is above board at all times. They don't have to worry about contractors receiving preferential treatment for favours done and the reputation of their corporation being tainted within the service provider industry. Just like in your condominium corporation, bad news travels quickly throughout our industry and trades become reluctant to involve themselves with corporations whose manager has a reputation for unsavory behaviour. We appreciate that neither our policies, the code nor the RCM designation guarantee there are no bad apples in our profession but as noted above, they do provide us with remedies to address an issue should one arise. We practice zero tolerance in this regard with our managers.

With confidence and peace of mind, don't you think an owner would be more inclined to offer their name as a potential candidate for a vacancy on the board if they knew their manager had the benefit of a training program? If you were a contractor quoting a job, wouldn't you prefer to know your bid would be accepted and presented fairly without bias? And if you were in the market for a condo wouldn't you feel more secure in your purchase knowing your investment is in the hands of a capable and trustworthy individual. And doesn't that maintain or help to increase market values of your units?

We appreciate that management fees represent a substantial portion of your annual budget and one of our goals is to continue to provide superior quality management. We feel that our promotion of education and achievement of industry related designations is one way of achieving that goal and providing you with better value for your management fee dollar.

Announcement!



Wilson, Blanchard Management is pleased to announce the appointment of Dean McCabe, R.C.M., ACCI as our Vice President of Operations effective June 1, 2011. Dean's appointment accommodates the expansion of our corporate team ensuring our clients and staff receive the highest quality of management services.

Hydro Rebates

By Jeff Lack, BAcc, CGA
Accounting Supervisor

There have been recent concerns raised about the 10% hydro rebate that as of January 1, 2011 is being offered to residential hydro customers on their total electricity bill. This includes electricity costs, delivery, regulatory charges, the debt retirement charge and taxes for a period of five years for consumers purchasing their electricity from a Utility or an Energy Retailer. The problem is that the rebate is being applied disparately to sub-metered condominiums and bulk metered condominiums.

In the sub-metered condos the unit owners receive the rebate for the hydro consumed by their units however the rebate is not offered, in some cases, for the hydro consumed by the

common elements if the annual consumption exceeds 250,000 kWh. In the bulk-metered condos, the unit owners do not receive the rebate directly but they do receive it through the condominium corporation and it is based on the total usage regardless of the annual consumption.

Through the combined efforts of one of our managers and Boards of Directors, as well as the GHC CCI, Burlington Hydro has now agreed that this is a problem and have committed to providing the rebate to sub-metered condominiums retroactive to January 1st. This particular corporation has now received its first rebate cheque.

If your corporation falls into this category, regardless of the area or utility providing electricity, and a rebate has not yet been received, please talk to your property manager about the current status of his / her communication with the local utility to enquire why. We see no reason why other electricity providers would not follow Burlington Hydro and offer the rebate retroactive to January 1st.

WB Magazine Feature

Wilson, Blanchard Management Inc. was recently featured in a 19-page supplement to the April / May 2011 edition of CondoBusiness Magazine. For more information or to obtain a copy, please email info@mediaedge.ca.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Dean McCabe, VP Operations on his recent election as the President of ACMO and to Karen Reynolds, Director of Property Management on her recent election as the Treasurer of ACMO.

Welcome!

Wilson, Blanchard Management would like to welcome our newest managed properties:

- Halton Condominium Corporation #203
- Halton Condominium Corporation #63
- Halton Condominium Corporation #109
- Halton Standard Condominium Corporation #584
- Toronto Standard Condominium Corporation #1434
- Brant Common Element Condominium Corporation #94
- Halton Standard Condominium Corporation #501
- Halton Standard Condominium Corporation #577
- Halton Common Element Condominium Corporation #581
- Metro Toronto Condominium Corporation #677
- Peel Condominium Corporation #136



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