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Leveraging Your Skills to Achieve Progression

Condominium management requires a diverse set of skills. These skills need to be updated constantly in our ever-changing role. Evolving continuing education requirements are the norm and have been for some time; in most professional occupations you should expect to see these requirements continue to develop as the bar is raised in our industry year after year.

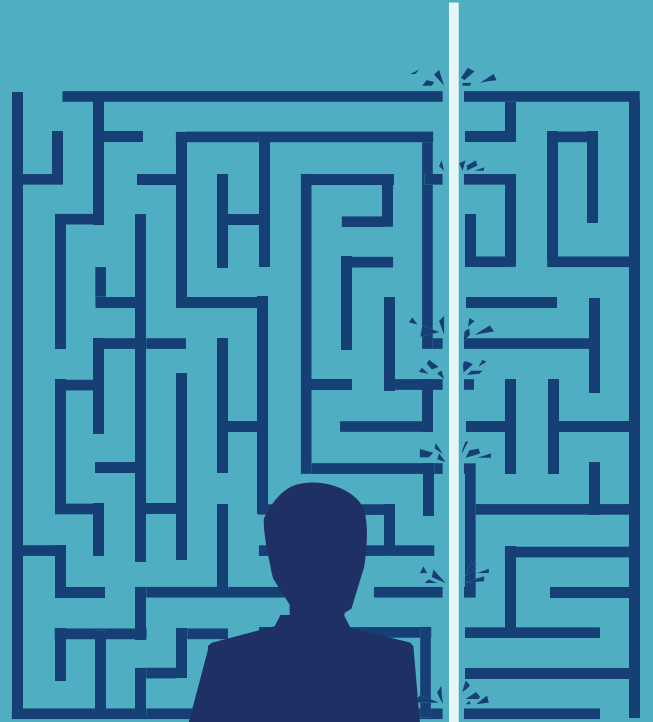
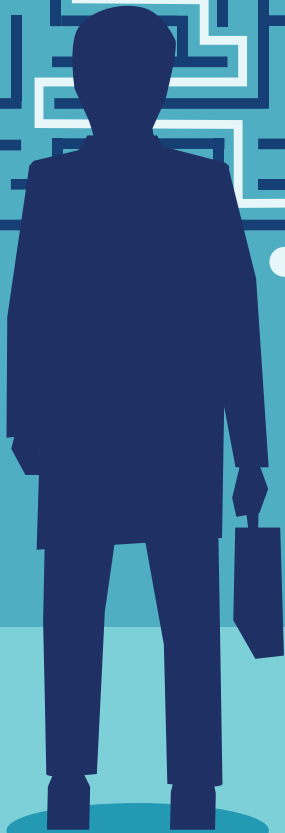
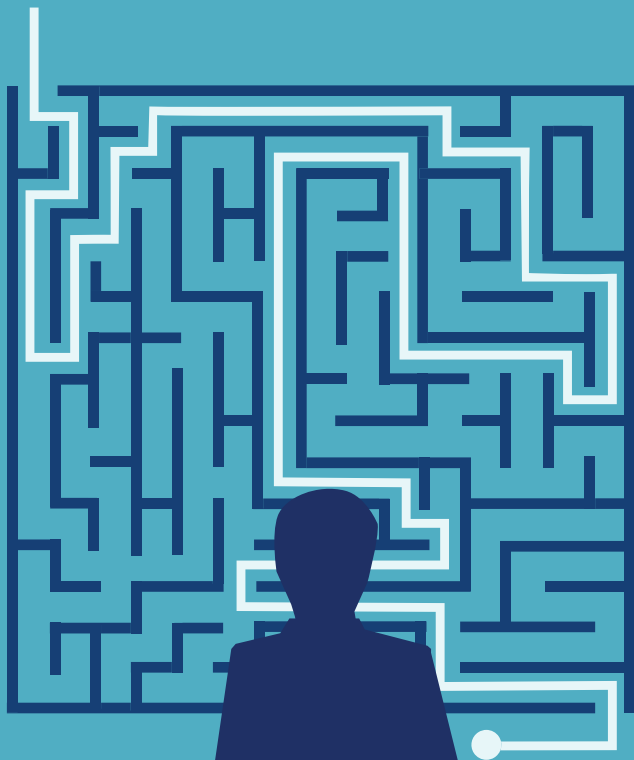
To be successful at anything you need to commit to it, and this commitment includes personal growth, stepping outside your comfort zone, getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, as well as a willingness to take calculated risks that others won't.

The definition of success in condominium management differs for each of us and we see that in the career paths of our industry colleagues. Many managers become an integral part of the communities they manage. They are respected by the boards, residents and staff alike. The thought of leaving the community is like leaving old friends, so they stay in the role for several years, sometimes decades. This brings continuity to the community and provides them with a wealth of knowledge, which is difficult to replace.

Some managers move between service providers in search of greener

pastures, a few extra dollars, growth opportunities, positive workplace culture, and work-life balance. They will hang their hat wherever they find what they are looking for. Other managers who have chosen to remain in the same organization for many years have rotated between condominium portfolios, many seeking to positively impact communities they serve.

This begs the question: what is the best way to achieve progression in the industry? Is it better to stay with one company, one community, or move from organization to organization? The answer is yes, no and maybe; there



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is no right answer as circumstances as well as various factors outside of the manager's control will dictate their own personal journey.

Determining your career path and how to navigate the maze of options to propel your career onward is no easy task. There is no short cut to tenure; think of your career path as a set of milestones extended over a period. Put your time in at each tier all the while preparing for the next. Be ready as opportunities arise so you are ready for them when they are available. Experiencing and successfully completing tasks or duties multiple times through multiple seasons and years will help you develop your skills in each discipline.

If you are currently in an administrative role, it is important to gain experience in being responsible and accountable for tasks or projects. Look for other opportunities to step up and contribute to your own development. Become the lead person on specific items at board meetings, enrol in a condominium management course through ACMO and work your way to holding

a General Licence. This path will open many doors and advance your career in as little as two years.

If you are newer to condominium management but have a wealth of business experience to draw on, you likely have many transferable skills including experience dealing with clients, customer service, financial review, business acumen, project management, people management, time and cost management or procurement, all of which can be utilized in condominium management. The ability to relate to residents, vendors, service providers, and professionals (lawyers, engineers and auditors for example), will enable you to be flexible in your approach, gaining trust and showing trust with all stakeholders will benefit your career growth. Exercising good judgment by utilizing active listening as well as the ability to observe the situation from another's point of view will allow you to react and respond wisely. You will have to start with a limited licence, however, with your added experience and skill sets, you will find the path to General Licence easier to achieve.

Already a General Licence holder, obtaining your RCM designation is a must; if you don't already have it, sit the exam, not only does it set you apart from other general licencees, it will likely be a requirement within many organizations in order to move up the ladder and take on more senior responsibilities. In any business, promotions are not given, they are earned. More importantly these positions require a change from being a manager to a leader of people, to quote a mentor of mine: Managing buildings is the easy part, managing people is the real challenge. Leading teams requires a different skill set than that of a manager. If you are ready to direct your career path towards leadership, show up eager every day, step up to challenges and offer solutions to complex issues. Raise your hand in times of turmoil and ask how you can help. Always remember that you need the support of the people around you, so treat the people in your care with respect and kindness. Look at your peers and colleagues and ask yourself this question: How do I get noticed? To be successful in these highly demanding positions, integrity, honesty, patience as well as maintaining an even temper in trying situations will allow your professionalism to shine through for all to see that you are ready when the opportunity for advancement presents itself. An even keeled demeanour and a positive approach will be essential to your long-term success.

The condominium management industry offers many opportunities for growth and development, a place where anyone can achieve progression if they have the will to do so. ■

Craig McMillan is President of Maple Ridge Community Management (MRCM), an Associa Company. He holds his RCM designation from ACMO, and his ACCI designation from CCI-National. He currently serves on four industry committees: The Professional Development Committee and Communications Committee with ACMO; the Professional & Business Partners Committee with CCI-GHC; as well as CMRAO's Advisory Committee.
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