

# Dancing with the Stars

John Oakes, a personal mentor and current CMRAO board member, has always described Condominium Management by likening it to “Dancing with the Stars.” The professional dancer’s role in



these celebrity partnerships is to make their amateur partner shine. I have long liked this simple analogy for managers as a “servant-leader” role within their Condominium Communities.

Definitionally, the servant leader puts followers’ needs, growth and well-being. Through adopting this style, condominium managers prioritize the organization (the condominium community), its board and volunteers and their staff above themselves. Like ducks, gracefully swimming on the surface, behind the scenes, we are tasked daily with many duties supporting the community, their volunteer leaders and their staff.

At its root, this should be simple: each person’s involvement is designed to make the experience better. I believe having a shared vision of the desired outcome is vital for the practical determination of priorities and execution of tasks, great and small. It is akin to ensuring that everyone is dancing to the same tune.

To my mind, conflict arises when we don’t share a vision for the community we serve. Let’s face it, despite a shared framework and increased regulation, there remains plenty of room to dance in Condoland. Having a director who marches to the beat of a different drummer is a recipe for many bruised toes on the dance floor. How many times have the priorities for your community been upended by the election of new board members? Why should this be the case?

Are sweeping changes to the community to be expected? When owners vote, are we thinking of who

will best work toward a shared goal?

The most successful groups I work with have a clear vision of who they are, and this belief is used as a touchstone for each of their decisions. Everyone knows what they’re getting at Tim Horton’s or Starbucks. I doubt many would confuse the two, and I think we’d all agree that their offerings come at different price points.

Why does this matter? How can we meet expectations if we don’t have a shared vision? Conflict is inevitable when we expect different things and strive towards different outcomes.

I hope you’ll take a little time to choose a song and work on dancing together. ■

Katherine Gow, RCM  
ACMO President

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