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# Utilizing Your Manager's Value

When external forces impose change, it can prove to be beneficial to any organization. A global pandemic has certainly been an external force. In an instant, and with no strategic plan, condo boards, managers and service providers had to adapt and provide services in new ways.

The benefit of the forced change is you can find value in new ways of doing things. Without being forced, we may not ask “why” we do something the way we do. When we do ask, the answer is often, “we have always done it this way.”

Condo management providers have had to be creative to continue providing essential services in response to a pandemic. In many cases, the condo board and management company have found they are able to utilize more of

the condo manager's value. Many plan to continue with these creative solutions post-pandemic.

### Working Remotely

The most obvious change forced by the pandemic has been the need to work remotely. For portfolio managers that are based out of a head office, the condo board and owners haven't noticed much change. Managers continue to reply to emails, make phone calls and tend to essential site inspections and projects. For on-site managers and administrators, this has been a new challenge. Many on-site management staff members have either shifted to full or partial remote work environments or, at minimum, working on-site in an office closed to the public to ensure social distanc-

ing. This has caused us to consider the real value of having staff in a building office. While every property is different based on the physical building and community needs, the main benefit of having staff on-site is convenience and customer service. Now that staff are not physically interacting with board members and residents, think about what service has truly been lost or can't be done another way. Are condos paying a premium to have a body in an office? In some cases, this extra cost is intended and desired to have that personalized service. But could this customer service level be achieved with non-licensed staff, thereby allowing the manager to focus on management duties? Many managers working remotely report that they are more efficient in their adminis-





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tration and analysis and have more time for special projects and strategic planning.

### Going Virtual

Another major shift forced on condo managers and boards is the need to conducting virtual board meetings. A select few were ahead of the technology curve and already meeting virtually before the pandemic. However, many boards and managers had little-to-no experience meeting virtually, and some were fearful of meeting by Zoom, Teams or other technology platforms. Early in 2021, and for the foreseeable future, we anticipate virtual meetings will be the only way to continue with corporation business. While access to technology and demographics were hurdles, these too can be overcome. Now, most boards and managers are praising the effectiveness of virtual meetings. Again, thinking about the value of the licenced manager's time, even just removing the travel time to-and-from meetings, has made the manager more efficient. Instead of that hour commute after a 3-hour board meeting at 10 pm, the manager can simply log off and start some action items right away, setting up for a productive morning to undertaking the board's directions. On average, video conferences are shorter than in-person meetings – and everyone can get behind that benefit.

### Electronic Documents

Another widely available but underutilized tool that condos have access to is electronic documents and digital approvals. While some boards have moved paperless, many directors still prefer receiving the entire meeting package and all professional reports in hardcopy. While we cannot remove the value of reading a paper copy, particularly in proofreading and editing, we can speak to the overwhelming speed, trackability and reduced physical contact that sharing electronic documents brings. What about signing contracts or minutes? Does this mean you have to print it out, sign and scan it back? Absolutely not! Free versions of Adobe Reader allow you to "Fill and Sign" any .pdf, and if you do have a paper that needs to move, every

iPhone and iPad has a Notes app that provides a great document scanning tool. There are many other solutions for making or keeping documents electronic. Again, reducing the administration part of a manager's job of passing papers around between parties allows them to be more efficient and focus on more important tasks.

These are just a few examples of shifts in the workflow that condo managers have adapted to. In many cases, we are finding ways that these changes are bringing more value to the condo corporation by allowing them to utilize the skills and education that they have been licenced to provide to their clients.

Condo boards, imagine if your manager had 16 extra hours per month (a half-day per week) due to streamlined administration to utilize on such tasks as:

- Providing a more robust procurement process and in-depth bid summary analysis for every project.
- Improving communications to residents by capturing and analyzing owner feedback with surveys and polls.
- Enhanced strategic and annual

planning, budgeting and long-term project planning.

Condo management service providers, think about the improved job satisfaction and productivity you may obtain from managers by merely reducing their travel schedule. There are many more examples of basic services that could be enhanced by efficient use of the manager's time.

The importance of a productive and efficient condo manager to the effective operation of a condo corporation can't be understated. This is an excellent time to examine your manager's role and processes to ensure that they are set-up for success to fully leverage the value they bring to your community. ■

**Brad Wells**, RCM, RPA, CMCA, is the President of Wilson Blanchard, working with condo communities for over 20 years. Brad is a member of the CMRAO Discipline and Discipline Appeals Committees, a speaker at multiple CCI and ACMO events and courses and an instructor for the ACMO RCM courses at Mohawk College. [wilsonblanchard.com](http://wilsonblanchard.com)

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