



**Bogdan Alexe, RCM, B.A.Sc.**  
B1 Management Group Inc.

# Managing the Relationship

## Between the Manager, the Board, and the Owners

Relationships are complicated. There are quite a few “ingredients” required for a relationship to be healthy and successful: respect, trust, honesty, compromise, communication and the list goes on. Relationships are dynamic and never stop evolving, and given they have so many “moving parts,” it is easy to understand how they need constant nurturing.

It is a well-known fact that we wear many “hats” while performing our duties as condominium managers. Being good at what we do will require a good understanding of the legal, financial and physical plant aspects of our day-to-day responsibilities and strong interpersonal skills. How we interact with others, manage to present and promote our ideas, and react to different job-related issues is paramount. Our ability to find

and promote the common ground represents the key to success.

### It's Complex

What makes it unique and challenging in our industry is that our activity is based on a rigorous legal framework. We are bound by management agreements, the Declaration, By-laws, Rules, the *Condominium Act, 1998*, and an array of other legislation that applies to condominiums. This creates a very complex environment for the condominium manager. Then add human interaction into the mix. We deal with people with different personalities, different backgrounds and different views and opinions.

As condominium managers, we interact with members of the board,

owners, residents and service providers. Each interaction is different. For example, when working with board members, we are legally bound by the management agreement and by the responsibility to abide by the code of ethics imposed by our licence. How do we manage to balance the two when the board members are clearly in a position of authority?

Sometimes board members, with all good intentions, seek a specific outcome through a particular avenue, which might not be the right way to deal with the matter. At that point, we need to maintain professionalism while being honest and upfront in our explanations that the issue may only be resolved by following an imposed legal framework or procedure.





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We need to bring compassion and compromise into the mix. It's not always what you say, but how you say it. The client will appreciate the honesty in presenting your concerns about how they suggested something to be done. Furthermore, they will appreciate your expertise in recommending the right compromise. This simple process will enhance your position as a trusted member of the team.

### Integrity is the Key

When dealing with an owner or resident, to some extent, we are in a position of being the "authority." Technically and legally, this is true, as we act under a management agreement. While we act as agents on behalf of the board (the authority), part of our job is to enforce the condominium corporation's documents and certain rules specific to the community.

Often we are the bearer of an unpleasant message to an owner, for example, "You cannot have other items stored on your balcony, except for patio furniture." The situation is complicated. On the one hand, the corporation expects you to enforce the rules, preferably without any

backfire. On the other hand, any owner you seek compliance from today could be on the board tomorrow, or they may be surveyed about their interaction with you.



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You don't want to burn bridges with poor communication. Integrity is the key here. Being honest while genuinely expressing compassion for an issue affecting the owners is essential and will go a long way. You will gain everyone's respect.

The same applies when we are in a working relationship with our service providers. Integrity and respect are key ingredients to this relationship. Setting clear expectations and communication will add to our overall success.

If we extrapolate, we can say that success in our daily work is built upon the many relationships we develop over time. The

manager's daily interactions are complex and occur with a variety of people, including the board, the employer, the owners, service providers and professionals. For

each interaction, the manager needs to adapt his approach.

In conclusion, truth and trust in our working relationships with an emphasis on fostering healthy, positive interactions will help us become more successful and maintain a good reputation. ■

**Bogdan Alexe**, RCM, B.A.Sc., is the founder and CEO of B1 Management Group Inc. He has over 20 years' experience in condominium management. He is passionate about condominium managers' education and coaching. [b1managementgroup.com](http://b1managementgroup.com)

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