



## Kelly Halkett, RCM

The Meritus Group Inc.

Year entered the profession: 2012

Year RCM obtained: 2020

Other education: Diploma in Retail Management,  
Medical Office Assistant Certificate

**Mentor(s) in the industry:** Dean McCabe and Tracey Gunn.

Dean and Tracey are two of the best out there. To work with them, learn from them, and grow based on the learnings I have received from them is like no other experience a manager could ever have.

**What path brought you to a career as a condominium manager?** In 2012 I worked in the marketing field and looked for a change. I talked to a friend about what I could explore as a new employment opportunity. At the time, I was managing a few rental income properties on the side for an investor. I enjoyed the experience, so my friend, a property manager, told me I would be a great condominium manager and to apply for a position as an assistant manager. I asked her what a typical day looked like as a manager and when she told me I would get to manage a community of residents, use my customer service skills and work with trades to maintain and repair the building. I was intrigued! I applied to the same company that she was working with and was hired as an assistant property manager and promoted to a property manager in 6-months. Eight years later, I haven't ever looked back or regretted my decision to change professions.

**How has your membership in ACMO helped you in your career?** The support that ACMO offers managers is exceptional. I appreciate how they have adapted to the current times and have continued to provide the same high-quality informational sessions but in various formats

so that everyone can find something that works for them to take part in.

The weekly newsletters are also a great source of current information relevant to what is happening in our industry. Being a member of ACMO helps me ensure that I continue to grow and advance as a manager.

**What is one must-have skill for a condominium manager? Why?** Managers need to be adaptable and able to respond to anything at any point in time. I find there are days when I map out all that I need to complete, and then I get that one call about some disaster that has just occurred and find that my entire day is off course. You are now dealing with anything and everything, yet nothing you planned to deal with that day! Managers wear so many different hats during the day, and often we have to jump from one hat to another with little notice, or sometimes we find ourselves wearing two hats at once. Hence, having the ability to adapt to the situation you are in now and not get overwhelmed is a considerable skill for managers to possess.

**Tell us about a personal success story on the job.** A personal success story comes from helping a resident and making a difference in their life. If it helps them figure out a weird noise in their suite to help re-build their suite after a significant flood/leak, or just spending time talking to them. During the early days of COVID, I had little notes of encouragement delivered to each resident's door once a week, anonymously.

The joy it created in the building amongst the resident made me very happy. It felt great to know that I could give the residents a small bit of hope during a time that was pretty scary for all of us.

We so rarely hear the words "thank you" in our job that when I get a thank you from a resident or when a resident takes the time to write to me to tell me that they appreciate my work in helping solve their problem, it feels great to know I could help and to me, that is a personal success.

**What's your biggest challenge as a manager?** The biggest challenge I face is accepting that I can't always please everyone, and not everyone will love what we do when managing their community. I am a people pleaser, and I have had to learn over the years that people have lots of opinions, and they are not afraid to let others know it. Sometimes those opinions don't line up with the vision of our Board of Directors and which we have for our communities. Learning to accept that a difference in views is not a personal attack on the work that we do each day but just an alternate viewpoint was a valuable lesson for me to learn and apply to my daily life. We as managers can't take things personally, and we have to remember that while our building is our place of work, it is home to the people who live there.

**What's your favourite part of the job?** The element of the unknown and not knowing what to expect on any given day is always exciting for me. In what other jobs can you have the fire department on-site, a massive leak, a resident stuck in

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an elevator, and a kind resident bringing you cookies and tea all in one day? The job can never be considered dull or boring!

**Best business advice you ever received.** My first Regional Manager told me that she wasn't an expert plumber, lawyer, or security guard but surrounded herself with the industry's best experts to rely on them for their knowledge and experience. I still follow this advice today as I hire what I consider the industry's best contractors. I pull from their knowledge and expertise to ensure that the community I manage is maintained at the highest level possible.

**Answer this statement – I am an RCM because...** It demonstrates that I am committed to the industry, to continued learning and professional development while ensuring that I offer service to the communities that I manage that is both regulated and respected.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?** I am sure I will have a bit more grey hair and maybe a few more wrinkles from the job in five years. However, I am confident I will still be in the thick of things, managing a considerable high rise, and hopefully sharing my love and

knowledge of the job with others.

**What recent project that you completed can we highlight?** Recently, we completed a large-scale replacement of the storm drainage system at the community I currently manage. With the recent heavy storms that Toronto has experienced, our current storm drain system was inefficient and could not handle the volume of water collected. As a result, it failed at a catastrophic level (think of seeing Niagara Falls pooling and collecting inside your building). The project involved installing a secondary drainage line and connecting it into the main building line, which sounds easy, except when you remember that you have to drill through concrete walls and building infrastructure. It creates significant noise and the closure of some amenities as the drainage system ran through the building's gym. It was an exciting challenge to ensure the project was completed, on time and within budget, with minimal disruptions to the residents' lives. It was an incredible learning experience in seeing how and why the engineers do what they do and the reasoning behind it. ■

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