



Cheryl Marsden, RCM

GPM Property Management Inc.
Year entered the profession: 2000
Year RCM obtained: 2003

Mentor(s) in the industry: I have been extremely fortunate to have worked with numerous individuals who have taken the time to share their knowledge and experiences with me. This ranges from colleagues to various contractors, auditors, solicitors and other professionals in the industry. One person in particular that stands out as a mentor is Harold Cipin. Harold was my first contact with this industry and was always there for guidance and support. Most importantly, Harold pushed me to learn and stressed the importance of getting my RCM.

What path brought you to a career as a condominium manager? How has your membership in ACMO helped you in your career? My career as a condominium manager happened

strictly by chance. I was working in a small construction firm as the office manager and one of my colleagues said I was wasting my time and should find something more challenging. He told me to get into property management as I had the right personality and drive. That was almost 20 years ago, and here I am today!

ACMO has been very instrumental in my career. In my earlier years, I learned a lot from the courses and was able to tie this in with what I was learning by following contractors around. Once I obtained my RCM designation and was a member of ACMO I found the continuous education seminars were very helpful especially in this ever-changing industry. The annual ACMO conference is especially valuable not only for the education, but also the

networking aspect with colleagues.

What is one must-have skill for a condo manager? Why? I believe as condominium managers we are required to have many skills. We have to be able to multi-task, be adaptable, communicate well, delegate, be extremely organized, self-motivated, resilient, patient, and the list goes on.

One skill in particular that I believe is important is listening. As a manager we interact with a broad scope of people on a daily basis. Whether it is staff, contractors, residents or board members we must listen to everyone in order to gain knowledge and understanding of the issues at hand. Should it be a plumbing issue or a resident having difficulties with a neighbour, in order to respond effectively we must listen and understand the problem as



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well as the impact it is having. Only then are we able to react and solve the issues.

Tell us about a personal success story on the job. Due to the length of time I have been in the industry I have had a lot of success from full parking garage repairs, corridor and lobby renovations, roof replacements, fan coil retrofits, and dealing with clean-ups and restorations after major floods that not only affect common elements but residents' homes. The success of any of these projects is always a team effort.

One of the things that I am most proud of is having had the privilege of working with a number of administrators over the years with whom I have been able to share my knowledge and guidance. These administrators have then gone on to become successful property managers!

What's your biggest challenge as a manager? What's your favourite part of the job? My biggest challenge as a property manager is the fact that we work in people's homes and expectations are high. When something

happens or goes wrong it is upsetting and residents can sometimes take out their anger or frustration on both management and staff. It is important to teach the team how to deal with unhappy or unreasonable residents, and we must be compassionate and put ourselves in their shoes. I do have pep talks with the staff to let them know and understand that when a resident is angry, it is not a personal attack but rather frustration that their comfort in their home has been breached.

The favourite part of my job is resolving problems and having happy residents and board members. It is also important to hear positive comments about the staff and contractors and share those remarks with them.

Best business advice you ever received. Enjoy what you do!

Where do you see yourself in five years? In five years I definitely see myself still in this industry, but in what capacity I'm not sure. I do know that at this particular moment I am extremely happy working for GPM Property Management and my current board of directors. ■

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