



Jason Riddle, RCM
Meritus Group Management Ltd.

Together, We Are Better

I received an invitation to contribute an article in *CM Magazine* on the heels of being awarded ACMO's 2018 Genesis Award.

I feel I am still at the stage in my career where I am learning: What could I offer that other managers, with more experience, would find useful? What is my "Value Proposition?"

I reflected on my career, and all of the challenges I have had in the short 40 months I have been a condominium manager. I have had great success and great failures, but in everything I have done in this industry, I have been able to learn a lesson or two. All these experiences have made me the manager I am today, and continue to shape the manager I will become. My experiences and what I take away shape what my "value proposition" is, and it is those lessons that I can share that I would hope others, no matter how experienced, can find useful.

The first property I managed was a critically underfunded condominium

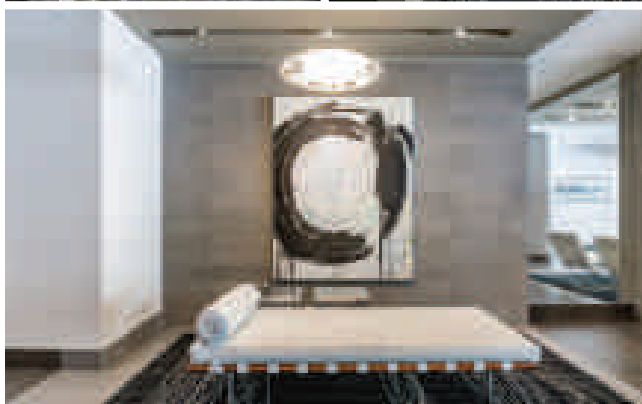
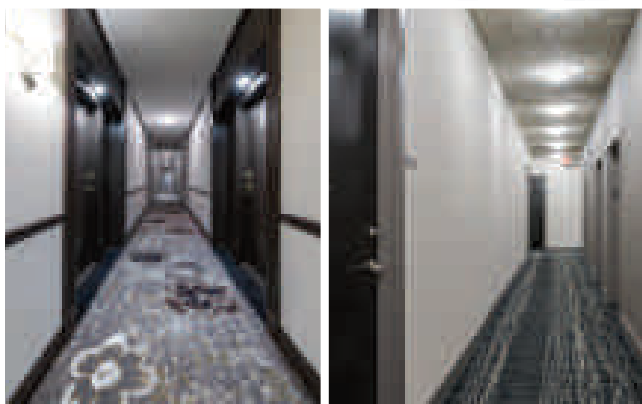
in desperate need of membrane replacement for their garage. The board was entertaining an idea brought to them by a contractor that would cost a tenth of the bids received by the engineers, by using a roll-on chemical product on the already extensively delaminated garage ceiling. I contacted several engineering firms and collected opinions on this approach. The first big lesson I learned was the importance of forging relationships with quality people in their respective fields. Some engineers came out and assisted me above and beyond because it was the right thing to do, others insisted I pay them before putting an opinion in writing. We are exposed to so many different people with different skill sets and experiences, being able to call up a professional and say, "Can I bounce something off of you?" is one of our greatest assets as a manager. Those who helped me are the types of professionals that I know will give their best to my boards. I also learned that engineers love to talk shop. Share a beer with them and you will

learn more about how your property physically works than is in any single text book.

The second property I managed at the same time as the first was a co-op, which was like managing a condo in the 1970s. They do not have protective legislation, they still use estoppel certificates, and are allowed to have restrictions that would never be allowed in our condo world. The greatest lesson I learned at this property was how to build consensus through a community. I feel that often as condo managers it is easy to have blinders on, to focus only on what the board wants. It is easier to convince a room of three people of something, than it is to convince an entire community. Every decision we ask the board to make is on behalf of every single owner – this should be at the heart of everything we do.

After a year at my first property, I learned a lesson that is difficult for many condo managers for a variety of reasons. There are times where, no matter how hard you work, no matter how much





Refurbishment Specialists

Quality

Recognized for our exceptional workmanship in interiors, we have been industry leaders for over thirty years.

Integrity

Known for being honest and direct, we pride ourselves on balancing both budget and environmental needs.

Trust

Driven by service and respect, our relationships are built to last. Our top priority is client confidence.

tricancontract.com
905.475.6703



BEST

BEST Consultants Martin Gerskup Architect Inc.



- Audits
- Building Repairs
- Condition Assessments
- Energy Audits
- Forensic Engineering
- Investigations
- Litigation Support
- Professional Instruction
- Reserve Fund Studies
- Specifications

BEST Consultants has been serving the condominium industry with quality and care since 1992.

The Building Envelope Experts

Call or email today for a quote!

Phone: +1-416-428-2378
Email: info@bestconsultants.ca
Website: <https://bestconsultants.ca>



Greater Toronto • Golden Horseshoe • Kitchener-Waterloo • Niagara



*Condominium
Management
with Experience
and Integrity*



PROFESSIONALLY MANAGING:
Condominiums
Office & Retail Buildings



16 Four Seasons Place, Suite 206
Toronto, Ontario M9B 6E5
(416) 642-2807 • (416) 642-2810-fax
1-800-999-7419 • www.wilsonblanchard.com

good you have done, you are only as good as the board allows you to be. If the relationship is soured, for your health, peace of mind and professional well-being, we must not be afraid to walk away.

When I had a board that was toxic, I learned that it can be a very lonely feeling. Managers can feel isolated by

group of colleagues that you can all lean on. Together, we are better.

I then managed a property that was under court appointed administration. This was an incredible experience for a new manager. Bill Thompson, ACMO's 2018 Leader of the Year, was the administrator. From Bill I learned the necessity

understood who you work for is every bit as important as integrity, ethical conviction and dedication. If the bottom line is more important than a manager's mental and physical health, you are simply not going to survive this industry. I was fired, because I fell apart.

It was the best thing to happen to me as a manager.

I was able to reset. I was able to choose a mentor and I used this opportunity to refine myself as a manager, and define who I want to be in this industry. I continue to learn lessons every day. The last 19 months of my career have been incredible in the ways of opportunity, challenges and experiences. If I did not hit rock bottom, I would not have been able to recover and have the type of year that won me the Genesis Award. ■

Jason Riddle completed all of the ACMO courses at once and passed the RCM exam on his first attempt all before working a day in management, and officially received his designation in October of 2018. Jason is proud to be a manager with the Meritus Group Management Ltd. themeritusgroup.ca

Every decision we ask the board to make is on behalf of every single owner – this should be at the heart of everything we do.

long hours spent onsite, and we often have no one we can talk to who understands our stress and what we deal with. I gathered a group of fellow managers who would have lunch together once a month to just vent. We became a much-needed support system, and we bounced ideas off each other, shared horror stories, and asked advice. Most importantly, it alleviated stress. Those lunches would lead to emails and calls to each other for advice, recommendations and shoulders to lean on. I encourage all managers to build a

of being precise with everything you say and do as there are serious ramifications that can be unanticipated.

It was while I managed this property that I learned my hardest lessons.

The workload was intense and I pulled long hours six days a week, 12 to sometimes 14 hours daily, and I put my health at risk. I am the manager that will not leave until the job is done. Unfortunately, there are properties that throw so much at you, that the job is never complete. I had to learn that asking for help was not weakness.

It was when I asked for help that I



caulking & maintenance

30+ Years Experience in Building Envelope & Restoration

Featuring Repairs, Assessments and Reporting on:

Caulking • Glazing • Leaks • Fire Stop • Smoke Seal • Custom Expansion Joint Solutions

Flashing • Curtain Wall • EIFS • Multi-Component Spray Foam

Rigid & Semi-Rigid Insulation • Water Repellant Coatings • Free Estimates

Fully Trained and Certified in Bosun's Chair, Swing-stage and Scaffolding Applications

LEED Platinum Certified Products

2861 Sherwood Heights Drive, Suite 28 • Oakville, Ontario L6J 7K1

Tel: 905-847-6618 • Fax: 905-847-8226 • www.encocaulking.com

 SEALANT AND WATERPROOFING ASSOCIATION

 TORONTO CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

 MISSISSAUGA CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

 ACMO ASSOCIATE