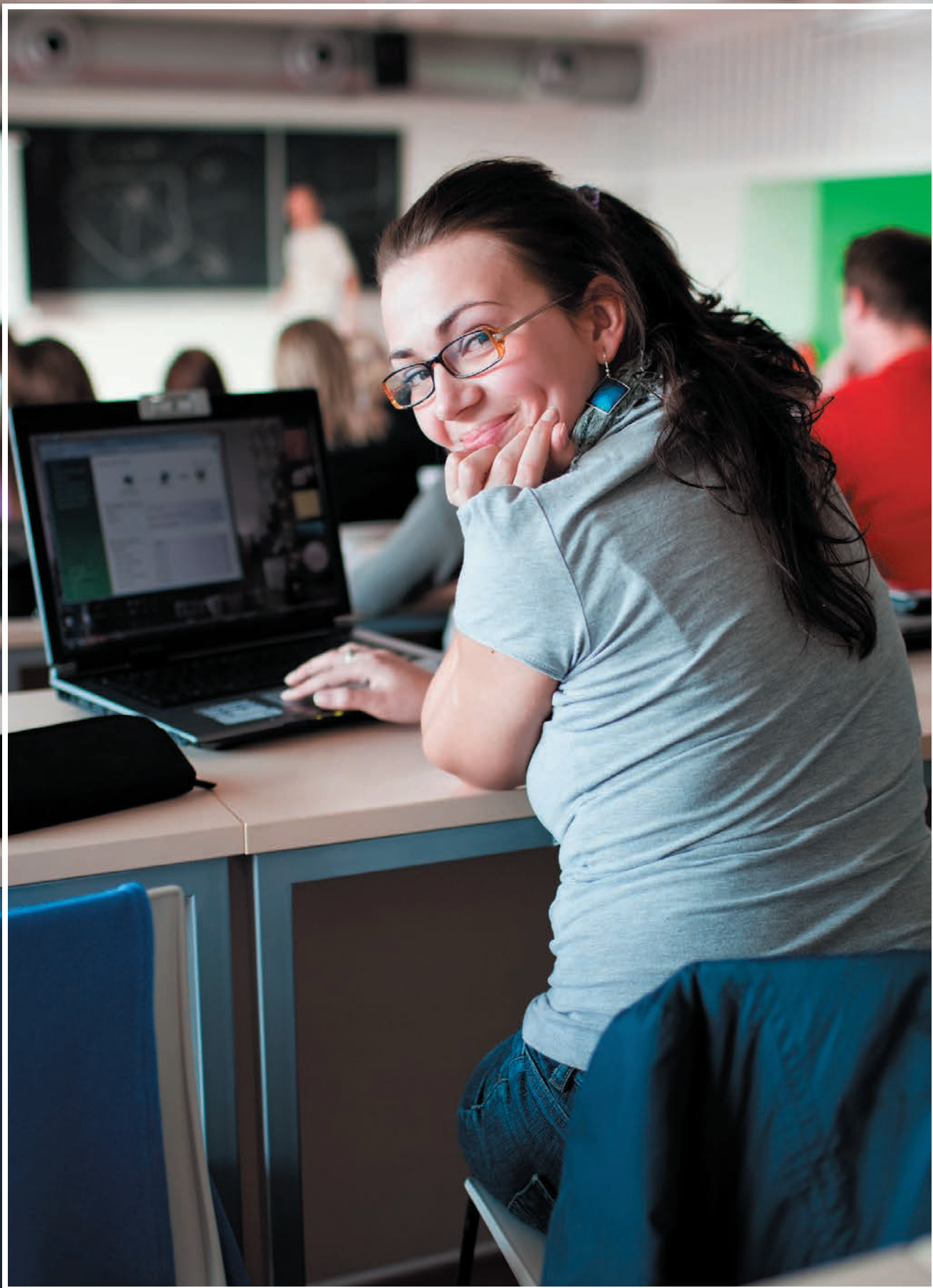


One Year Later





Stephanie Cox, RCM
Regional Vice-President
Crossbridge Condominium
Services

Mandatory Director Training

Benefits for boards & management

When I was asked to write an article on the benefits of the mandatory Director Training and the benefits that it provides to the boards and management I thought it best that I actually take the training so I knew more about that which I was asked to write.

Firstly, I found that the modules were very well designed and easy to use. I hate to admit that I am of the generation that is used to classroom learning, and still prefer to read text on paper rather than a screen. I was, therefore, pleasantly surprised by how easy and informative the online training actually was. The training is made up of 21 modules, each containing 10–15 slides. At the beginning of each

segment, the learning objectives are clearly outlined and throughout there were a few test questions that must be answered, true or false. For managers who live and breathe condominiums and condominium management, each module shouldn't take more than 10 minutes, which would mean that the whole training should take no more than 3 ½–4 hours. For directors, they can run through each module at their own pace and can log out and back in, easily picking up where they left off. This is a great feature for board members who, as volunteers, may wish to spread their training out over a longer period of time. Some may perceive the training to be difficult

and intimidating, but in fact it is very simple and should not be a deterrent to anyone wishing to volunteer for the board.

The course gives current and potential directors an overview of condominium governance and the role of directors. This is helpful to managers who often find themselves responsible for training directors who haven't taken CCI's director courses. It highlights some principles that are key to a successful board. For instance, directors shall not engage in business transactions except at a meeting. We are also reminded that directors must exercise reasonable care and must ask questions to make sure they



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are making informed decisions. It reminds directors that there is a duty of confidentiality, that they must have regular board meetings. It talks about the role of the president in encouraging participation and encouraging the board to speak with one voice, and to encourage all board members to follow the code of ethics. In Module 4 about Effective Leadership it explains that the president sits at the pleasure of the board and can be removed from the

role by a vote at any board meeting. The president's position is the only position on the board that is "elected" not appointed. This is an important difference for boards and managers to know, as occasionally a president may act outside proper governance, and the other board members feel that they have no recourse, when they actually do. The module talks about how each director is responsible for fostering a positive community by respectful and

regular communication with boards, owners and their condominium manager.

In the section about the board's statutory obligations it states that the board is responsible for managing the property and the assets, preparing

to do. Later in the module it does state that the board is "responsible to set policies, and that the manager, manages without daily oversight". Unfortunately, these lines of responsibility can get blurred and create problems. It is imperative that the

board and manager are working collaboratively to achieve all these statutory duties and obligations. In module 21, Understanding Condominium Management, it alludes to the

manager as a member of the governance team, and states "a licensed manager cannot counsel, advise or knowingly assist a person to contravene the Act or any other piece of legislation." This is an extra standard of care for licensed managers, who are sometimes faced with improper direction from boards. Managers in this position need to seek assistance in dealing with these matters to protect their licence.

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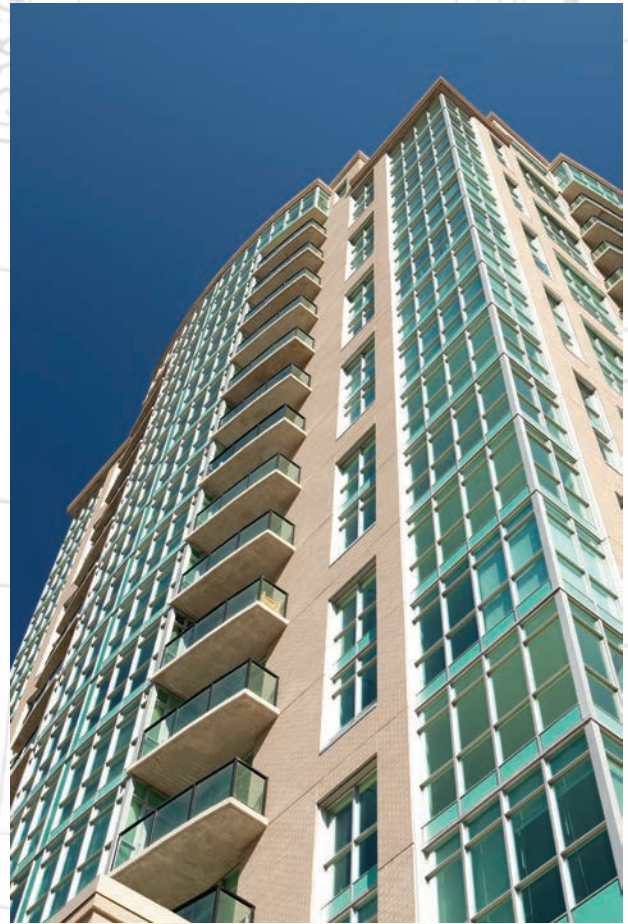
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The other modules touch on other key topics such as best practices for conducting board and owner meetings, obligations regarding corporate records, basic responsibilities in repairs and maintenance, financial responsibilities, proper procurement processes to name a few.

In Module 19 and 20 we learn about the role of the Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO) and Condominium Authority Tribunal (CAT). It talks about how the purpose of the tribunal is to eventually assist owners, boards and managers in solving issues before they become disputes, which can be very costly when they end in mediation, arbitration or court proceedings. Parties will be able to submit their disputes online. It is the intent that the CAT will publish the results of these disputes, with the parties' names removed for privacy, so that these decisions will be a resource for managers and boards in trying to solve similar disputes within their communities. We know that right now, the CAT is only dealing with disputes about request for records, but as the CAO and CAT matures and evolves, it will offer

more and more assistance to boards and managers and become a very valuable resource.

The feedback that I have had from directors regarding the mandatory training has been for the most part very positive. Board members can still seek additional and more in-depth education from organizations like the CCI – Canadian Condominium Institute.

Finally, I would like to challenge every manager reading this article to take the director training if they have not already. I can guarantee that everyone will learn something and it is a great way to reinforce what you already know. Knowledge is the key to success. ■

Stephanie Cox, RCM graduated from Ryerson with Bachelor of Business Management in 1990 and then joined the family property management business Abinger Investment Properties Inc. In June 2000, Stephanie joined Crossbridge as part of the acquisition of the condominium portfolio. Stephanie was promoted to the position of Regional Vice-President of Crossbridge in 2012. Crossbridgecs.com

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