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A Brave New World

Managing Change

I think we can all agree that nothing ever stays the same for very long. Change is the only constant in life. As we enter this new decade the speed of change will increase exponentially. Through the lens of today, it is likely many of us won't recognize our work life by the end of this decade just as today's younger generation can't imagine how older generations survived without smart phones or email.

Condominium Management: The Shape of Things to Come

To understand what condominium management may evolve into, we have to look at our current challenges along with tools available or in development to address these needs.

With the supply of managers not meeting the ever-increasing demand

and tens of thousands of residential condominium units coming on line each year, combined with increased compensation demands that are outstripping the client's ability and willingness to pay, don't be surprised to see artificial intelligence begin to really penetrate the sector over the next few years. It is not a stretch to see a condominium world that is more automated and virtual in nature. Managers may have multiple sites with thousands of units under their direct supervision, with the aid of artificial intelligence to complete day-to-day tasks, such as answering voicemails, emails, with self-service options for residents on their cell phones via apps. Rather than being bogged down with daily administrative tasks, this will allow the manager

to focus on serving the client's greater needs, focusing on key events, building relationships and working with other industry professionals to ensure the communities they serve to thrive.

What is Change Management?

Change management is the process of managing the people aspect of a change event. It is how the process is managed that leads to a successful outcome for all stakeholders. Change is often perceived as being negative, but it can also be a positive, empowering event, such as a promotion or a new job.

When it is forced upon us, change can be perceived as negative by many, like government licensing of managers or a revised *Condominium Act*,

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introduced into our industry simultaneously. Over two years later, we are still dealing with the challenges that came from this change event.

Change Adoption Curve

The first reaction to change can be shock or denial that it is happening, which can lead to anger or even fear. This may manifest itself in attempts to derail the change.

As time passes, acceptance of the change occurs as people realize this is the

new reality, and it is better they should come to terms with that.

The final stage is a commitment to the change as people understand the need and get on board to make it successful. They become advocates as they see the benefits for them personally.

Resistance Management

Ignoring the people side of change will certainly impact the outcome. Morale will be negatively impacted resulting in a "them and us" division

within stakeholder groups. Stress and confusion can increase during this time and valued stakeholders may choose to leave the organization or industry as cynicism sets in.

How the change is communicated will ensure that acceptance happens faster. Identifying what you are addressing and communicating that to stakeholders, using various mediums, will raise their awareness of why the change is needed. This will also result in greater acceptance.

Creating change champions that will speak to the benefits of the new way will help persuade those reluctant stakeholders to accept the inevitable change. These champions will also be a good source of feedback on how the change is being received by stakeholders.

Successful Outcomes

A great way to successfully manage change events is to introduce a continuous change culture that focuses on positive change events, so when faced with a perceived negative one, it will meet with less resistance from stakeholders.

An endorsement must come from leadership as people need to know those in charge believe so that they can, especially if it is perceived to have a negative effect on them. Leadership needs to focus on a positive message, be sincere, and as transparent as possible offering an open dialogue with those affected throughout the process.

This speaks to the culture of the organization and it helps if there is a history of being open to ideas from the team. It is even more important to do this when the message has a negative connotation. Good leaders face these challenges head-on, face to face, and deliver information as to why the change is happening.

Look for the opportunities change brings and exploit them to your benefit. ■

Craig McMillan is President of Maple Ridge Community Management (MRCM), an Associa Company. He holds his RCM designation from ACMO, and his ACCI designation from CCI-National. He currently serves on three industry committees: The Professional Development Committee with ACMO; the Professional & Business Partners Committee with CCI-GHC; as well as CMRAO's Advisory Committee. mrcm.ca



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