



Juliet Atha, RCM

President, Best Practices Property Management Inc.

Year entered the profession: 2012

Year RCM obtained: 2014

Other education: Masters Business Education (Ivey)

Mentor(s) in the industry: Thanks to all the RCMs who've helped me along the way, but most especially to Janine Wallace-Rivard.

What path brought you to a career as a condominium manager?

I had owned a company in the publishing industry and when its future was threatened by technology changes, I looked at alternate careers. I'd been a director of four different condominium boards over two decades and had always been passionate about good governance for condos. Condominium property management was a great fit for my skills, and I wanted to move to a growth industry – which condominium management certainly is! Several managers I knew, including [the late] Andy Wallace, provided encouragement.

How has your membership in ACMO helped you in your career?

Wow, I don't even know where to start. The learning opportunities. Networking. The friendships I've made. And the many delightful conversations shared by other managers that begin with "You won't believe what happened to me today..."

What is one must-have skill for a condo manager? Why? Good manners.

No matter what disaster or deficiency or issue is happening in the building, if you treat people with respect, you've made everything easier.

Tell us about a personal success story on the job. It's not strictly "on the job", but I love teaching the ACMO courses. It's given me so much satisfaction to teach skills, ethics and "best practices" so that new entrants to the industry can succeed. It's wonderful when students come back to me years later to say how much they enjoyed my course.

What's your biggest challenge as a manager? What's your favourite part of the job? I haven't met a challenge that didn't turn out to be a learning opportunity. So problem-solving is my favourite part of the job.

Best business advice you ever received. "Pick your battles." Having been a former board member, I used

have to remind myself that it's their decision, not mine.

Answer this statement – I am an RCM because ... It's important to me to participate in an association that has a rich history of striving to improve our industry and believes in the value of education.

What is your top tip for new managers and RCMs?

Make sure everything you do is beyond reproach and properly documented.

What recent project that you completed can we highlight. For me, the best projects are not physical building (although I enjoy them too), they're the myriad of small projects and processes you put in place to deal with a

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to get frustrated that as a manager, I didn't have a vote at board meetings. When a board doesn't follow my recommendation, I still occasionally

neglected corporation to get it functioning properly. As a resident of a new site put it recently: "Thank you for taming the Wild West." ■



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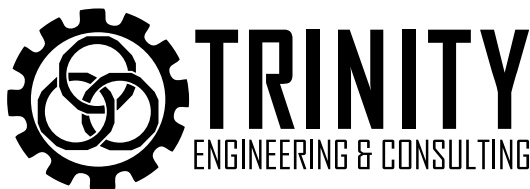
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Michael Francolla, RCM

Regional Manager, FirstService Residential

Year entered the profession: 2015

Year RCM obtained: September 2017

Other education: Electronics Engineering Technologist, BA Business Administration

Mentor(s) in the industry: John Damaren, RCM. Laurie Adams, RCM.

What path brought you to a career as a condominium manager? How has your membership in ACMO helped you in your career? My background has been quite diverse, starting my career in the field of “high technologies” first as a technician and then progressing to more senior roles including national sales manager. I was in this industry for about 25 years overall.

After purchasing a condominium and getting to know my property manager (Claudia Damaren), she suggested that with my background in sales and service and my personality, I would be a good fit as a property manager. This field was completely unknown to me, but at the time I was looking for a change and became intrigued by the industry. This is when I was introduced to John Damaren and started my career as a property manager. I haven’t looked back since.

ACMO stood out as the main path to me becoming a professional property manager, not only because of the education but the high standards they set in the industry. Once I set out on my path to becoming a property manager, my first goal was to attain my RCM designation. It is my opinion that those with their RCM designation are proving their commitment, and maintaining this commitment and high standard in the industry.

What is one must-have skill for a condo manager? Why? I would have to say two skills – patience and diplomacy. As a property manager, we have to deal with residents and issues on a daily basis and most of these are because there is a problem or perceived problem. We must have the patience to listen to the entire problem

through its second-year audit, it had a long list of issues arising from deficiencies in the building, many severely disgruntled owners and unfortunately had been through a number of property managers in a short period of time. This had led to a very volatile and challenging situation for the management team. I was asked to step in and attempt

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to fully understand and not just jump to conclusions. Then we must have the diplomacy to be able to communicate this solution to the resident even if it’s not the answer they are looking for, they hopefully understand it and appreciate that we are working in their best interest.

Tell us about a personal success story on the job. I would suggest that every day is an opportunity for great success stories in our industry. My most recent challenge and my most rewarding success story thus far is my current building. As a new building just heading

to bring this situation under control and turn things around. Through a lot of hard work on the part of everyone in the management office and greatly improved communication with the board and owners, we managed to work through many of the issues and create a much more positive community for the building and its residents.

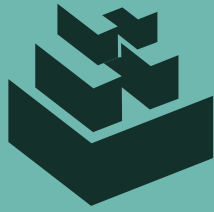
What’s your biggest challenge as a manager? What’s your favourite part of the job? One of the biggest challenges as a manager is the vast majority of condo owners do not understand fully condominium living and what is

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their responsibility versus that of the corporation. They often communicate with management with an attitude of its “them against the corporation”.

What's your favourite part of the job? Working through these issues with the residents and getting them to understand that management is on their side and we really are working in their best interest. Through mutual understanding, most walk out of the office much happier than when they walked in.

Best business advice you ever received. The best business advice I ever received is “Plan your work and work your plan”. The better you plan within your building the easier things become when those unexpected issues arise (which is all the time).

The best advice I received as a property manager is don't take things personally. Generally, the residents are upset with a situation that is often out of your control but you are the one in the direct line of fire. This is their home and likely their biggest investment.

Answer this statement – I am an RCM because... When I made the decision to enter property manage-

ment as a career, I made a commitment to be the best PM I could possibly be and my RCM designation shows my continued commitment to this industry and my career choice.

Where do you see yourself in five years? I have recently been promoted to Regional Manager and I look forward to continued success in this industry. Over the next five years, I would like to work more closely with more of our industry leaders and my peers to continue to raise the bar for our profession.

What recent project that you completed can we highlight I love technology and working with forward-thinking companies that can change the way we do things and make a positive impact to our buildings. I have worked with a few companies and the results have been beyond my expectations. I have done a few projects now with PartityGo and the energy savings we have been able to realize have far exceeded my expectations, but it takes a vision to make projects like this a success. Vision from all the parties and I've been lucky to have worked with some great visionaries on my boards. ■

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