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Tips for hiring and working with a condo manager

Many condominium corporations will hire a condo manager (or condo management company) to look after the day-to-day affairs of the condominium complex. Here are some tips if you are hiring and working with a condo manager:

Do your research

If your board is looking to hire a condo manager, do your research first! You may want to check your board's minutes to see if there are any discussions about or issues with hiring a condo manager. You should ask the condo manager you would like to hire for current board references. You should also ensure these references are contacted and their feedback is documented as part of the hiring process.

Some things that the board should consider in hiring a condo manager are:

- **Does the manager provide services tailored to your condo and how?**
- **What level of authority does the manager want to have?**
Avoid any management agreement that transfers decision-making authority from the board to the manager or management company.
- **How does the manager communicate with the board and owners?**
Do they have well defined processes and procedures to facilitate timely and regular communication with the board and the owners?
- **How reachable or readily available are they?**
With technology today, the board should always be able to contact the manager or their representatives.
- **Does the manager have reliable contractors that can respond to service calls in a timely and skillful manner?**
- **Are the management services clearly outlined in the management agreement?**
Is there room for flexibility? Is there a termination clause and what does it contain?

Adapted from Ask Maria: By Maria Bartolotti, newconceptmanagement.com/blog, September 2013

Set expectations and clarify tasks

Agreements with condo managers and other service providers may bind future boards. You must be aware of the contractual terms. When negotiating a management agreement, the board should clarify the range of tasks beforehand, document all terms in writing, and seek legal advice if necessary.

Communicate

When working with your condo manager, there should be frequent communication between the board and the manager. That way, matters are dealt with promptly and professionally. A board may want to invite their condo manager to attend regular board meetings and ensure that the company can reach them via phone or e-mail at all times. The condo corporation should also respond promptly to concerns raised by its condo manager.

Be knowledgeable

When dealing with your condo manager, it helps to be knowledgeable about the condominium. For example, you should be updated on the condo board's meeting minutes and be able to describe any current issues that your condo corporation is facing. The information you provide can help your condo manager do his or her job.

Seek professional assistance

Your condo manager is not your financial advisor, engineer, or lawyer – nor should they be. You should always refer to a professional when seeking specialized advice on financial, structural/ engineering, and legal matters.

Comply with the *Condominium Property Act (CPA)*

A board will often delegate tasks to their condo manager, relying on their condo management experience to make informed decisions. Although the board expects the condo manager to comply with the CPA, the board is ultimately responsible for complying with the CPA in the decisions it makes and the actions it takes in running the condominium corporation.

