



## Patrick Robson, RCM

Brookfield Condominium Services Ltd.

**Managers must show residents that their homes are in capable and responsible hands...**

**Year entered the profession:** 1989

**Year RCM obtained:** 2003

**Other education:** I attended George Brown and Humber College.

**Mentor(s) in the industry:** I have respected many individuals in this profession throughout the years. As young managers we tend to look up to people who we respect or who have taught us. To name a few would not be fair to the many who helped me become the manager I am today. The individuals I speak of now know who they are and I thank each one of you for your help and guidance over the many years.

**The Condo Act is under review. Are you following/involved in the process? The Ontario**

**Government followed ACMO's recommendation and proposed mandatory requirements for managers. What impact might this have for condo managers in Ontario?** I have been actively following this process. I attended the different townhall meetings with ACMO. The updating of the *Condominium Act* is important as it will raise our business to a professional level which is appropriate. In addition, all managers being licensed is a positive outcome. The members of ACMO that spent countless hours dealing with the Government and updating of the Act should all be thanked. Their hardwork will ensure an industry with an ethical approach along with guidelines and protocols that we through

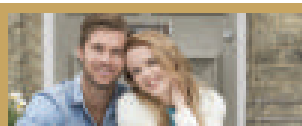
ACMO are fortunate to already have in place.

**What is the value of a Professional Code of Ethics?** By having a professional Code of Ethics we are creating guidelines to ensure that we all follow and operate within the code. This shows the professionalism of our industry.

**Tell us about a personal success story on the job.** In 2009 I started managing my present site. The building was registered in 1991. When I first started managing this site many suites had water leaking into them from around the windows. In 2008 the condominium corporation had the caulking replaced. Unfortunately, what was completed was an overbeading versus replacement. Since I have been managing, the



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# Spotlight

corporation has recaulked about 60%–65% of the windows. The difference this time is that an engineer has been reviewing the work. It has also become part of the scope to grind all the precast joints down to ensure proper adhesion. Since this process has been followed the building leaks have been substantially reduced to just about eliminated. Residents are happy with the results as they now see that the problem is being addressed properly.

**What's your biggest challenge as a manager? What's your favourite part of the job?** My favourite part of the job is dealing with the public daily and never experiencing the same thing each day. The biggest challenge for me is being able to show that each person is treated the same as the next person, and that there is no preferential treatment.

**Best business advice you ever received.** DO NOT PANIC!! In an emergency situation we need to keep very calm. Over the years I have been involved in floods, fires, death and a drowning. By keeping calm it allowed the individual situation to be dealt with properly.

I remember calling a plumber (when I was just starting out as a manager) and I was having what I called a FLOOD. The plumber has since passed away but I will always remember his answer to me. He stated “Patrick do you have hip waders on?” I told him no and what does this have to do with it! He responded “Patrick what you have is a water escapement or a leak, there is no need to panic as we are only a few minutes away and can stop the water.” The water was stopped and there was very little damage.

When we panic mistakes can happen and this can cause the residents to get upset or worse. Managers must show residents that their homes are in capable and responsible hands – a professional manager looking after their interests. ❖

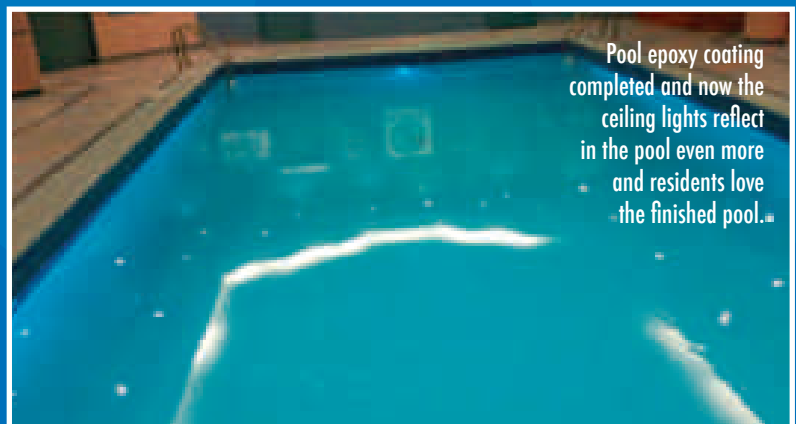
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Pool during construction. We ended up finding about 850 square feet of debonding of marblelyte.



Pool epoxy coating completed and now the ceiling lights reflect in the pool even more and residents love the finished pool. =

**Swimming Pool And Sanitary Drains:** The corporation was having problems with chemical balancing within pool due to poor circulation. In addition we had water leaks and odours coming from the deck drains. I had the plumber complete an inspection of the drains using camera equipment and found a lot of dirt in a particular area. We ended up opening the deck (cutting through 16 inches of concrete) to get to the underside of the slab. Upon digging down we found that the sanitary drain line had separated and dropped six inches from the main line; this issue was repaired. While the floor was opened, we took the opportunity to open additional points and replaced all jet lines feeding the pool and installed two new jets as well. Since this work was completed all odours are gone and the chemical levels have been perfect within the pool.



## Oslu Cami, RCM

Wilson Blanchard Management Inc.

**One of my favourite sayings is If you think you know Everything you know NOTHING...**

**I WORK** out of the Hamilton office as a portfolio manager. My growing group of properties consists of 12 condominium corporations, totalling approximately 950 units. I manage various types of condominiums that include common elements condo, standard corporations and a combination of residential-commercial, commercial-industrial. These properties consist of townhomes, mid-rise and highrise buildings, located in Grimsby, Stoney Creek, Hamilton, Ancaster, Dundas and Burlington.

**Year entered the profession:** I started in 2010 and what triggered my desire to enter into this profession was the 5 years I served as a board member of The Esprit, a beautiful 240-unit building which is part of the Kingsbridge Garden Development, a landmark in the

city of Mississauga.

In 2010 and early 2011, I started working as an assistant manager, first with highrise buildings and then with a busy 10 condo commercial portfolio with locations in Markham, Scarborough, Toronto and Mississauga. In 2011, I moved to the residential side of things as a condominium manager in Mississauga. I started with Wilson Blanchard Management Inc. in Hamilton in August 2012 after moving with my family to Stoney Creek, Ontario.

**Year RCM obtained:** I obtained my RCM in 2013.

**Other education:** Bachelor in Computer Science 1996. University of Tirana, Albania

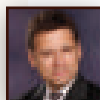
**Mentor(s) in the industry:** The person responsible for me becoming a condominium manager, and mentoring me during my

first year in the industry, was Joe Natale of Networks Property Management. Joe's ideas and practicality in condominium problem solving inspired me to pursue this career.

I am now working for one of the most respected companies in the industry and I owe my recent personal success to Paul Casuccio and Mike Mullen. In this industry I learn something new every day and these two executives of the company are here to help, guide me through every obstacle I encounter along the way. One of my favourite sayings is "If you think you know Everything you know NOTHING". Everyday I find something to learn, and Paul and Mike are here to add their support and insight. I am constantly looking for new challenges and when I have the right support around I feel more

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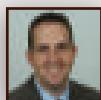
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confident in taking over and dealing with those challenges.

**Are you following / involved in the Condo Act review process? The Ontario Government followed ACMO's recommendation and proposed mandatory requirements for managers. What impact might this have for condo managers in Ontario?** Yes, certainly I'm following the review process. It has a direct impact on my personal work and life, therefore I cannot be indifferent to these changes. There are pros and cons with all changes, but I believe the new Act will bring more positive ones. There is a lot to discuss and say about the proposed Condo Act and there aren't enough pages in this magazine to cover it all, but I think there are a couple of positive changes that are worth mentioning: – The establishment of a Condo Office will give the industry more credibility. Hopefully it will help to reduce unit owner's skepticism about the role of the boards, the managers and the industry itself.

– Another positive change is that after two failed attempts to get quorum, condos can hold their Annual General Meetings despite a low turnout of owners or proxies. There are many scenarios when it is extremely difficult to obtain quorum to hold AGMs such as new highrises in Toronto where a large percentage of the owners are investors who don't live in the country, in common element condominiums where many unit owners do not understand their responsibilities as owners and in some cases, don't even realize they own a condominium. Quorum is also difficult to obtain in condominiums where the average age of the owners is relatively young and there is little interest in participating in these meetings. Of course there are some instances where it seems owners just "don't care." Several unsuccessful attempts to get quorum at an AGM is costly for the corporation and time consuming for all involved. This change to the Act will allow the manager and the board members to focus and conduct affairs of the corporation.

**What is the value of a Professional Code of Ethics?** I believe the Code of Ethics is the most

important mechanism that drives all service-industry businesses. It is what identifies and guides a profession. The better you apply the Code of Ethics in your everyday work, the more confident you will feel about the future. The Code of Ethics brings out the best in all of us, it makes us socially responsible and ensures a higher standard of professionalism.

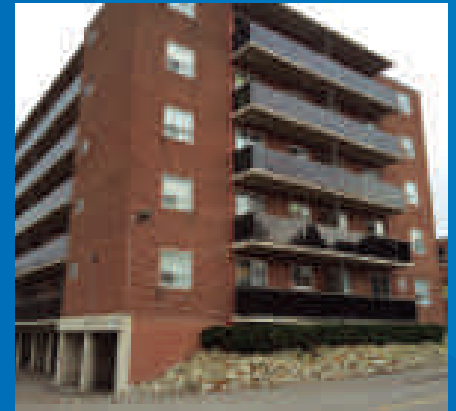
**Tell us about a personal success story on the job.** I have had many successful experiences thus far over the last four years. My favourite and very recent success story involves a large and extremely complex commercial and industrial site which was self-managed for approximately four years. When Wilson Blanchard took over this site and assigned it to me, I was a bit intimidated after reviewing all the documents. This was a complex building, managed by a board who had very little knowledge of condominium management, and with seemingly countless problems I wasn't quite sure where to start.

Issues included but were not limited to the following:

- a grossly underfunded budget
- incorrect allocation of common element percentages to units, wrongfully billing hydro to commercial units when the hydro should have been included in the common element fees
- a deficit of \$30,000 per year for four years in a row
- significant amounts of money borrowed from the reserve fund and transferred to the operating account
- the corporation paying for utilities such as gas and hydro for the industrial units when these should have been paid by individual units
- a very inefficient electrical system which was resulting in huge hydro bills
- units more than 29 months in arrears, etc.

As you can imagine there were many extremely upset unit owners and business operators, which didn't make things any easier to deal with.

- Now, 16 months later, we have
- balanced the budget for the first time in five years of the corporation's existence
  - have correctly allocated all common element fees
  - completed a LED lighting retrofit which is realizing significant savings



**2373 King Street East  
Hamilton, Ontario**

**We started managing this corporation in December 2012. When we took over, the building looked very tired and dated, and financially it was in very poor shape. Once again, by working closely with the new board we managed to transform the look by installing new modern balcony railings. We also repainted and freshened up the hallways, and the financial numbers are better than they have ever been. There is a lot more to do but the progress has been great and the response from thankful owners is overwhelming. The most important thing that we delivered, was winning the trust of the unit owners and the board, and letting them know we are there to help and serve them.**

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# Spotlight

- recovered a large portion of what was owed to the Reserve Fund and collected all the arrears without a single unit in a current lien position

- recovered tens of thousands of dollars of utility bills paid for industrial units through the last three years, etc.

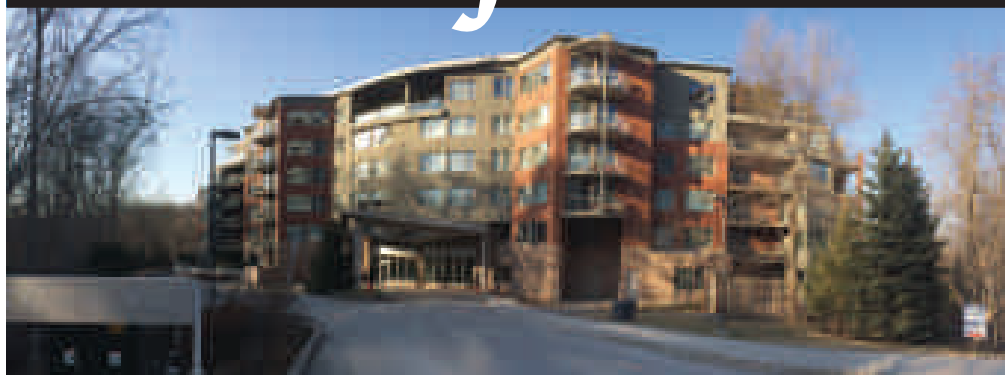
This would not have been possible without the cooperation of the new board of directors and the management company.

**What's your biggest challenge as a manager? What's your favourite part of the job?** The biggest challenge is the skepticism that still exists out there amongst unit owners toward management, the board and the industry. A lack of knowledge about the condominium world makes communication with some owners very difficult. A great deal of time and effort needs to be spent with unit owners, to educate them on the many issues that arise every day. When people decide to buy into a condominium, they should do their due diligence and become as informed as possible. This, after all is possibly their most important investment and thus their understanding of the condo environment, declaration, bylaws, rules and the Condo Act, is crucial.

**Favourite Part** Even though this is usually a thankless job, once in awhile you receive sincere thanks for helping owners with their issues, usually after a successfully completed project or during an AGM when the financials are showing positive numbers. Their appreciation makes me feel good and is my motivation to do my best to serve those communities.

I have been lucky enough to see this industry from all three angles. As a condo owner, a board member and as a property manager. As a result, I try to put myself in a unit owner's or board member's position before I make any recommendations or decisions for their corporation.

**Best business advice you ever received.** Do what you like, where you fit in, where you see yourself getting better at it and where you see a future forward. Don't do something only for the paycheck because you will be too busy hating it and not have time to succeed. ❖



**Another challenging recent project was at 77 Governors Rd, Dundas, Ontario, one of the more upscale highrises in the area.**

**Several major projects took place at the same time during September through November 2014, such as caulking the entire building and window sill replacement, epoxy of sills to extend their life expectancy and common area refurbishment including all hallway and common area carpet replacement and painting.**

**What made the caulking and sills project very challenging was the very complex architecture of the building. To apply caulking and replace window sills in all areas, the contractor needed to use engineered suspended stages, bosun chairs, a cherry picker and ladders. The fact that the building is along a creek and the Bruce Trail did not make things any easier. Nevertheless the project went very smoothly and was completed two weeks ahead of time with almost no intrusion in the everyday life of the residents. The contractor did a fabulous job and followed up to correct every deficiency that was reported by the engineers.**

**The hallways badly needed a facelift and the new carpet has completely transformed the look of the common elements. This project was also completed one week ahead of time and the response of the unit owners was overwhelmingly positive.**

