



SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH FOR CondoSTRENGTH !

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Coincident with the 35th Anniversary of the Canadian Condominium Institute, your Chapter presented the first CondoSTRENGTH session in March. Just to refresh your memory CondoSTRENGTH is an initiative which is happening across the country. Local Chapters are presenting FREE seminars for Directors and by Directors to allow Board Directors a forum in which to discuss various topics and to learn from each other's experiences. Whatever is new to any given Board members is not new to another. Someone else has experienced the same challenge or the same success so why not share?

Our session's first gathering featured the topic of "PROPERTY MANAGEMENT" – Small, Medium, and Large. We selected Property Management because virtually all Boards (excluding Self Managed ones) have contractual relationships with a Property Management Firm/Manager. Every Board has had both ups and downs with these relationships and we wanted to focus on what works? Lessons learned! For this and future sessions to be truly successful we insisted on neutrality – no specific names or firms would be cited and discussions were proactive versus complaint driven. Also, if any professionals were in the room as "condominium directors" they were asked to "take off" their professional hats. The focus must be on experiences only – no soliciting.

Now we know that the Board and Property Management relationship is most affected by the Condominium's size. Hence our three Board Presidents spoke about their experiences:

SMALL – Claude Filion spoke to his experiences as President of a small 30 unit low rise where the Board is "hands on" and very community focussed with minimal reliance on

property management except for "back office" financial and accounting support.

MEDIUM – Constance Hudak spoke to the relationship at her site which is a 60 plus town home unit. Her presentation covered methodology used to change property management firms from the "developer's choice" to the Board's need with focus on communication of expectations and deliverables.

LARGE – Yves LaRose spoke of his experience as one President of a multi tower complex of three condominiums with extensive shared facilities. In this case, the property management was full time and the relationship and reliance between the condominiums and manager were extensive and deep. However, regardless of size, there are common threads – communication, clear statement of expectation and deliverables, and then performance monitoring.

We knew we had picked a great topic because our first session sold out in 48 hours! We had just under 60 Directors in attendance and extensive discussion back and forth as each speaker presented his/her experiences. Because this was our first session "audience evaluation" is very important. Well, participants told us we are definitely on the right track! They considered the presentation to be of the right length, that it covered the issues very well, and that CCI-EO should continue doing this regularly and often. The most important element of the "audience evaluation" was the support for the "for Directors and by Directors" format – their own forum for discussion and networking. So a big THANK YOU to all who attended and helped organize – STAY TUNED FOR MORE. ■