

Milena Reis, RCM

Malvern Condominium Property Management
Year entered the profession: 2007
Year RCM obtained: 2015

Other education: Accounting Diploma

Mentor(s) in the industry:

I don't have any specific mentors in the industry. My mentors have always been the executive team members in the companies I have worked for. Today, I am honoured to have Jessica Laker and Lyndsey McNally of Malvern provide me with exceptional support, guidance and leadership. They lead by example and encourage and inspire those around them.

Licensing for condominium managers is now a reality. How will a licence benefit your career as an RCM? What impact might this have for all condominium managers in Ontario? Licensing establishes a higher set of standards within the industry. Managing a condominium requires the proper education, tools and resources.

Being regulated by the Government of Ontario, I believe, will help to deliver further credibility and to reform our industry. Although mandatory licensing may seem like a barrier to some, we have to remember that this industry is booming and managing condominiums is extremely complex and requires a high level of competence. Licensing confirms that I have demonstrated the ability, knowledge and education to be able to carry out significant responsibilities. Our licence brings us to a level of professionalism that is not only recognized and controlled by an association, it is also now regulated by the government; which speaks volumes to where our industry has come.

What path brought you to a career as a condominium manager? How has your membership in ACMO helped you in your career? I started off work-

ing for a small commercial management firm in 2007. I assisted with financial reporting and lease administration. After about eight years, the company downsized and I was forced to look for another job. I knew I wanted to be a property manager someday and was interested more in the commercial side. I remember saying many times "I can do that job." Residential condominium property management was not something I even considered or thought of, until an electrician I knew recommended me to a condominium management firm. Little did I know what I was getting myself into! I remember my first day, I felt lost and overwhelmed. I didn't even know what a Declaration was and I had board members and residents calling me and emailing me with issues and concerns that I was not familiar with. This certainly wasn't what I was used to



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and to be honest I struggled. I became stressed and thought I was at the end of my rope with this field. That was when everything changed for me, I picked myself up and tried again. I enrolled in ACMO and started to take the condominium courses with Mohawk College. I attended luncheons and seminars and spoke to other industry leaders and trades at the events. It was ACMO that provided me with the tools I was missing and it helped to get me to where I needed to be and where I am today. Am I stress-free and everything comes easily? Definitely not! However, I have the ability to develop my skills with many resources such as ACMO and can proudly say that I deliver condominium property management services in a professional and educated manner.

Tell us about a personal success story on the job. I have been fortunate enough to have had many. One that sticks out in my mind, was the attendance record at an AGM. This community always had issues reaching quorum. The last two AGMs (particularly my last one with this community) had no issues whatsoever, in fact, it was the best turnout they had ever had and a full room to show for it! The next day my board had written my boss to inform him of the outstanding work I had done and that the attendance record was all due to my efforts. It was those couple of years prior where I formed many great relationships with the residents and it paid off. I took the time to get to know them, listen to them, educate them and encouraged them to be part of the community. I held community events, like summer BBQs, holiday parties, educational seminars and social activities. More and more residents started to come out to these events as word got around quickly that they were worth attending. The residents were always so thankful, and they truly did enjoy themselves. I was determined to get the same turnout at our AGM, as I did at any one of those events, and my mission was accomplished!

What's your biggest challenge as a manager? What's your favourite part of the job? My biggest challenge as a manager is knowing when to shut it down. It's easy to get carried away with the work and get burnt out; the work doesn't stop, the complaints are continuous, projects need to be over-

seen and issues are being brought to your attention regularly. It's easy to get lost in the work hoping to find an end to the pile. I have to remind myself that the pile doesn't end, you finish up one item and then you get two more; but that's also the exciting part! The challenge of it all. No two days are alike, every day is different and every day I am learning something new! I do love my job (although some days it's more like a love/hate relationship).

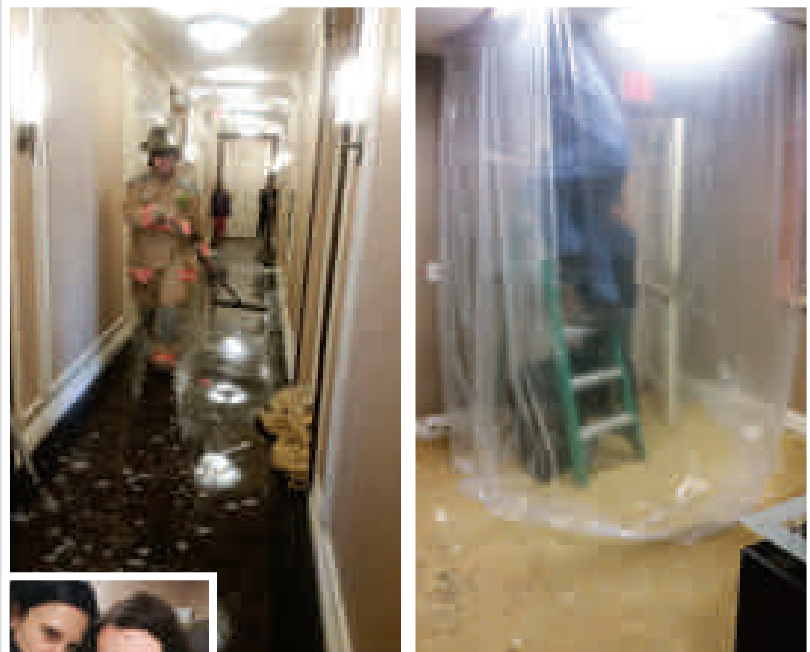
Best business advice you ever received. *1. Don't take things personally.* I take things personally, it's who I am and it's not an easy change. I do the best I can every day, I put 110% effort into everything I do and when someone shoots me down, it's hard not to take it to heart.

You are the person who has to say "no" from time to time and there are some people who just can't accept that. I have come to learn, not only from my experience in this industry, but also from reading self-help books, that the way someone responds, although directed at me, is not about me.

2. Listen. People want to be heard. Taking the extra 5, 10, 60 minutes to listen to someone, whether it's their side of the story about a particular situation or a grandmother that wants to show you pictures and tell you all about their grandchildren, those extra few minutes that you give someone goes a long way in this industry. Take the time to be compassionate towards others in their home. ■

Spotlight

The flood! In February 2016 we had a fan coil burst and caused damages to several units and common elements from the 4th floor down. I was fortunate to have help with this project from Jessica Laker. We had to work with and facilitate emergency services, a wide range of trades, insurance companies, onsite staff, owners and residents to ensure that all aspects of the restoration and rebuilt was completed in a competent and timely fashion. Although a terrible situation to have happen, it was an interesting project to be a part of.



Inset: Jessica and I, late at night, during the insanity. We felt like empowered managers wanting to get the job done!
Top left: Emergency services in the 4th floor corridor.
Top right: Restoration and rebuild.