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The Balancing Act of People Leadership

The role of a property manager is not the typical 9 to 5 workday – it’s a lifestyle. There are office hours to be filled, managing the physical building, keeping expenditures under budget but still ensuring everything is maintained while dealing with difficult residents and creating a community you are proud to serve and be a part of. Even the most task list-oriented manager will find that by mid-day, the list of items you set out to complete has become more of a dream than a reality. Perhaps you accomplished one or two items and then the life of the condominium takes over. The elevator that was just repaired is down; there is a flood in a unit; you have been politely listening to the same resident for the fifth time this week infuriated

over cigarette butts once again landing on their balcony. There is never enough time in the day to complete everything you set out to.

Finally, the day comes to an end and you leave the office, more times than not you have already stayed an hour or two after the office has closed in an effort to finish off some things, and hope for a less hectic day tomorrow. You just sit down to have what you hope is a quiet dinner and the phone rings – there is an emergency onsite. After an investigation and calling in the appropriate vendors, you were able to mitigate the issue. The rest of the evening is seemingly uneventful, and you were even able to finish your dinner and unwind. You call it a night and crawl into bed, then the 3:00 a.m. wake-up call, the completed repair

didn’t hold up and you are again in crisis mode. Once more, you mitigate the issue and maybe get another hour or two of sleep before you head back to the office and start a new day.

Pause, Stop, Rewind and Replay

This pause, stop, rewind and replay cycle is all too typical in the life of a property manager, thus the reference of this career being more of a lifestyle than a job. A manager really has to be passionate about this field to make it a lifelong career. For those who successfully move up in the industry to a senior level position, you find a whole other set of challenges, especially given the new licensing requirements. Not only will you need a great deal of



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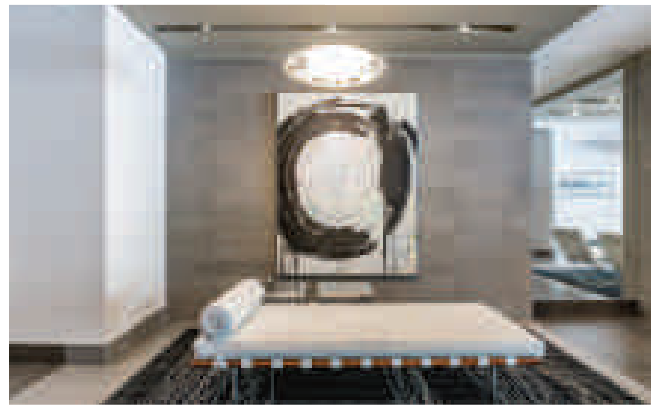
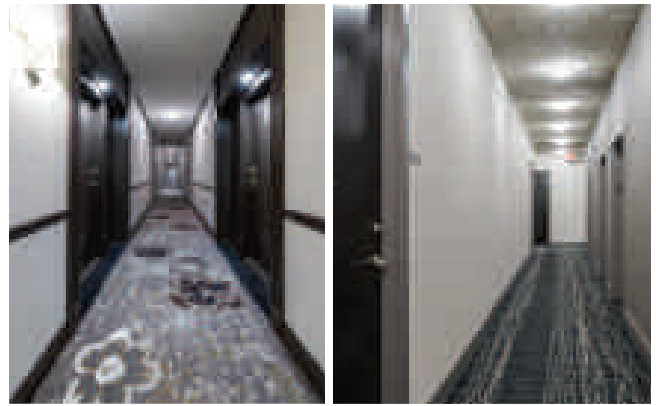
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industry knowledge, leadership skills and a focus on financial acumen for the business overall are also required. Balancing the needs of the people they lead with the company vision and health of the business are key skills for senior level managers.

Leading and inspiring a team is a journey. You are impacting the lives of others and leaving a footprint in their lives and careers. The daily challenges of property management are compounded by having to support several managers who are in varying stages of their careers. Knowing when to step in and when to sit on the sidelines and support is a science of its own which takes experience and understanding. You have to know when to be fully engaged and when to pass the baton back on to the manager. The regional/supervisory role is often the lifeline to our managers who are on the front line. Often you are called upon to have the expertise of the condo lawyer, the engineer, the financial wizard and the overall coach. The Boards rely on you, the residents rely on you, the managers rely on you and the company relies on you. Making the right decision at the right time in the interest of everyone and everything is key.

Lead, Support and Inspire Your Teams

The senior support position is often the tie that binds. They build trust with their teams and communities. They are charged with speaking to human error without casting blame on their manager or company. It's not easy coming to that very uncomfortable table in front of the Board and having to communicate that an error was made. Supervisors have to be able to support the manager in a non-offensive and supportive fashion. They have to be willing to take the bullet in order to move in a collaborative and positive direction. It is far better to be able to step in, put the plan in place to fix the issue and then step out. The difficult part is accomplishing this while not taking over and overshadowing your manager. At times it feels as though you are walking on a tight rope; each and every step could be the one that leads to a sudden fall and the ultimate demise of the plan.

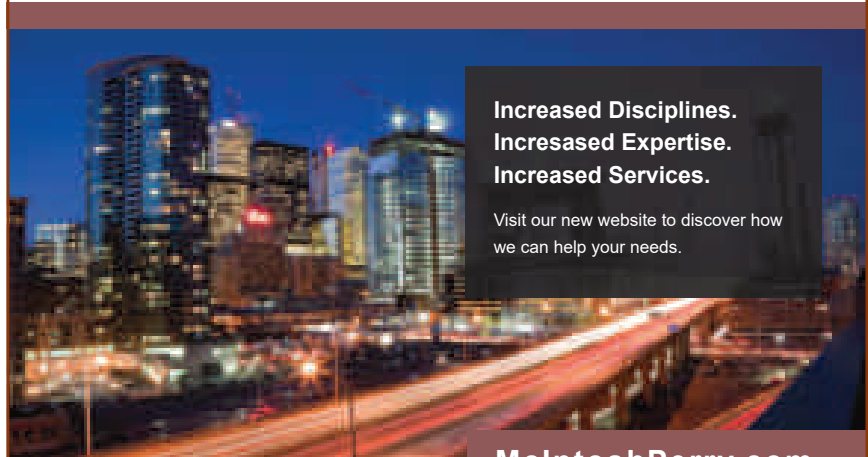
Maintaining a collaborative and empowered team while supporting and serving our communities has to be the most challenging responsibility of the regional role. We do not sell a product; we serve our residents and are advocates for our corporations. We help build communities and protect people's homes. We have to remember people are not products, they are not numbers; they are complex and passionate, and each person carries their own unique set of needs and desires. We must be

respectful and humble in an industry that very seldom recognizes our attributes and or contributions. Our industry is people focused and driven, that must be the core of our profession. Their care is our concern. ■

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