

SHOULD WE GO ALL DIGITAL?



For years, we've provided the *Condominium News and Views* in both electronic and paper formats. This is the first time CCI Manitoba's *Condominium News and Views* has been published in electronic-only format with no paper copies delivered to our members. If you're wondering why we did this or if future editions will also be electronic-only format, you are not alone, as we are wondering about the future too.

WHY DID WE DO IT?

Short answer - pandemic economics. The long answer is that the pandemic negatively impacted our membership revenue, and the subsequent supply chain issues and inflation negatively impacted our expenses. During the first year of the pandemic our membership revenue decreased by 20%, and while we have taken steps to recover lapsed memberships, we have only recovered half of what we lost. In addition to the decreased revenue, over the second and third years of the pandemic, the cost of publishing a paper copy of the *Condominium News and Views* has gone up by 40%, even though we are printing 25% fewer copies (not only did membership decrease, more members have decided to only receive the electronic version). The decreased revenue and increased costs have led to successive deficits, reducing our financial reserves and driving us to save money on this winter edition by not publishing a paper version.

HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT?

The pandemic and lockdowns forced us to stop holding in-person events such as our popular Lunch-and-Learns, the Presidents' Forum, and even our AGM. Like most other organizations, we pivoted to electronic delivery and eliminated the registration fee for events. This was done as an attempt

to maintain membership value as best we could, but it also resulted in less revenue.

To offset the membership revenue decrease, we've been growing our advertising and sponsorship revenue, but since our membership revenue represents about two thirds of our total revenue, it is difficult to offset the membership decreases, hence the membership fee increase introduced last spring.

We have attempted to grow our membership through several means. We contacted prior lapsed members and convinced some to rejoin. To attract new members, we've started making better use of our social media channels and our website, to make it easier for prospective members to find us. Also, we introduced a member referral program to help find new members, and introduced an early renewal incentive program to help retain current members. As well, we restructured our membership fees to make it economically easier for individuals and small condo corporations to join. To date though, these efforts have been inadequate to get us back to pre-pandemic membership numbers.

WHAT IS THE PLAN GOING FORWARD?

We're working on it but we need your help. If you are happy with the value you receive through your CCI membership, tell others about us - friends, family and colleagues that live in condominiums or provide services to condominiums. Growing our membership to pre-pandemic levels and beyond is really the only long-term sustainable option for us.

Aside from attempting to grow our membership revenue, we continue to focus on costs. Now that in-person events have resumed we have started using a less expensive location to host our monthly education lunch-and-learns. CCI National conferences have resumed in person, but we are minimizing our travel cost and sending fewer participants. Most of our other expenses are non-discretionary and have gone up at the current rates of inflation, leaving only the paper copy of the newsletter as an expense we can reduce. At this point we have not decided whether the spring and summer newsletters will be available in paper copies.

What are your thoughts on the matter? Numerous members have suggested eliminating the paper copy of the past few years for a few reasons, such as reducing paper consumption to reduce the environmental impact, also since many members now consume their news through an electronic device, they just don't make use of the paper copy anymore. On the other hand, lots of members want to get away from their electronic devices (or don't have any) and prefer the paper copy.

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