

CCI NATIONAL REPORT



CCI held its second virtual National Leaders Forum and Conference May 28-29. The next one in the fall will be virtual as well, but we can all look forward to the expected in-person event in the spring of 2022.

As was the case for the conference in the fall of 2020, there was a diverse set of topics covered with ample opportunity to ask questions of the presenters. What follows are some of my lessons learned.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING 101: NEWBIE TO KNOW-IT-ALL

I am definitely a newbie when it comes to social media, having only a LinkedIn account. Needless to say, I learned a lot but mostly learned that I'm still a newbie and won't be rushing out to establish accounts on other social media platforms. The session was organized as an expert panel with time allocated for Q&A.

Social Media as a Verb

While we are all familiar with Googling on the internet I didn't realize YouTube was also a verb now, especially for millennials. Several CCI chapters have embraced YouTube and started organizing their content into posts of 5 minutes or less. Playlists are used to organize the topics with a similar theme - for example, you may have a theme for the Provincial Condo Act (the Act) with separate posts for different


topics or sections of the Act or perhaps a playlist of insurance related topics. The two key takeaways are the KISS principle (keep it short and sweet) and if you want to engage the younger generations, such as the millennials, you have to use YouTube.

Social Media Scheduling Applications

Imagine you have a presence on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Myspace (just kidding), Google Hangouts, Pinterest, TikTok to name a few. How would you find the time to post items and keep them fresh and active? Fortunately, there is an app for that. Two that were mentioned were <https://www.hootsuite.com> and <https://buffer.com>. A useful website that provides a comparison of the two and an overview of what they do is <https://thedigitalmerchant.com/content-marketing/social-media/buffer-vs-hootsuite-compared/>. Key point is that without regular content updates users will stop engaging.

Social Media Strategy

Exactly what do you want to accomplish via social media? Don't have a strategy? Hootsuite has an 8-step template <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-create-a-social-media-marketing-plan/>. The key point is to establish a strategy to achieve your objectives, then measure how well you are doing at it - you must use analytics.



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Final Social Media Tips

The experts emphasized key tips at the end of the session

- Analytics! You have to know your numbers (views, users, likes, followers, retweets) and their trends. Are you achieving your objectives?
- Just getting started? Which platform to choose?
 - Best platform for general or membership or condo corporations - Facebook
 - Industry professionals, such as property managers, lawyers, etc - LinkedIn
 - Engagement during or after live events - Twitter
 - Stories - Instagram or Facebook
 - Free tools to get started - <https://www.canva.com>
 - Pick one, master it, then try another.
- Use a scheduling app and schedule your posts well in advance but don't set it and forget it - keep up with current events (such as ever changing pandemic restrictions)
- Use a teleprompter for training videos and presentations so you don't have to repeatedly look down at your notes. An example is <https://bigvu.tv> but there are lots in the App Store and in Google Play.
- Like & Follow others, whether it be CCI Chapters, Property Managers, other Condo Corporations, if you want to increase the chatter and engagement.

WHAT HAS THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US?

If you didn't have an emergency plan before the pandemic, you probably have one now. Emergency contact information still needs to be maintained along with protocols or policies for the common elements. How will you phase out your own restrictions? Once this pandemic ends, don't throw your plan away. Keep it and enhance it, thinking about other possible emergencies such as significant loss due to fire or flood or interruptions to operations due to power failures or snow storms. A key aspect of the plan should be timely, concise, and frequent communications. Keep whatever PPE you've accumulated and ensure it stays updated in anticipation of the next pandemic.

Expect some PPSD (post pandemic stress disorder) as some unit owners will feel more or less comfortable as the various restrictions are lifted - it will take a while to get used to meeting people without masks, shaking hands, hugs, not being able to find the hand sanitizer dispenser, etc. A recent article suggests we get used to the phrase "Are you comfortable hugging yet?"!

Encourage patience and understanding. Expect that some people will show the strain from the past two years and take some time to fully recover. Consider picking up copies of the Canadian Mental Health Guide and/or distributing the link to it on their website.²

Virtual meetings are probably here to stay, but perhaps in a hybrid format with some people in a room and some via a video link. Condo Corporations (CCs) should keep in mind that travel times for

property managers and key contractors are lost time for them, in both directions. If they can attend virtually it should be easier to schedule an important meeting. Do you have snowbirds on your Board - now they can participate from anywhere. Similarly, unit owners can participate in AGMs remotely now too. Caveat - make sure your bylaws allow for electronic participation in Board meetings and owner meetings.

How does your CC's ToDo list look? Have you deferred some projects because of the pandemic? Have you looked at the prices of building materials, especially lumber? Using your reserve fund study (RFS) as guidance along with your latest maintenance and inspection reports and prioritize your projects as appropriate. Some you may be able to defer while some delayed projects will only increase your costs and risks (such as water leaks).

MISCELLANEOUS

There were other sessions that I got a lot of value out of, including

- An update on CCI plans to bring more value to its members by better leveraging the knowledge, skills and abilities of all Chapters in the National organization;
- An insurance panel with a cross-country update on insurance issues - the good news is that the market is softening a bit, so premiums should start stabilizing over the next year or so;
- When and how to review and update your condo docs - the declaration and bylaws
- A legal panel with a sampling of court cases across the country and lessons learned - know your Act, your Declaration and Bylaws well and communicate clearly, concisely and frequently to minimize legal expenses (note <https://www.canlii.org/en/> is an excellent resource to learn from others across the country);
- The keynote session on artificial intelligence was very interesting and had implications for CCs, both now and in the future;
- And a session on what to look for when hiring a property manager. One thought provoking topic was if your CC is struggling to find the right property manager and frequently changes property managers, perhaps the problem is not the property manager.

All in all, it was an excellent value for the time I invested to attend virtually. It was about six hours each of the two days for a very low price and I learned a lot. I look forward to the chance to attend one in person but will consider attending virtually again because of the significantly lower costs - no flights, hotels, cars or restaurant meals required.

ALAN FORBES

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¹ Post-pandemic 'normal' will be an adjustment, The Washington Post, Jason Rezaian https://winnipeg-can-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=16e0abb8d_1345e33

² Mental Health Resources for Winnipeg <https://mbwpg.cmha.ca/resources/mental-health-resource-guide-for-winnipeg/>



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