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The Last Word

The Future is Now

Why We Need to Face Our Fears and Embrace Progress



Today, the internet has changed the way we communicate, watch television, bank, or even call a taxi. Reforms under Bill 106, which are scheduled to roll out this fall, will allow for technological updates in condominium governance. So if the nearly twenty-year-old Condo Act has caught up with the times, why are so many condominium corporations still failing to embrace technological solutions?

Excuse #1: Why change when things already work?

The most common excuse that I hear when new technology is introduced is, “why change when things already work?” This is meant to justify the fear of the unknown, anxiety over learning something new, and complacency in maintaining the status quo. But, past success is no guarantee for the future, especially when the only constant is change. Often, there is no hesitation when it comes to installing a more energy efficient piece of equipment or use of a more sustainable material for building infrastructure. However, applying the “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” mentality can prevent condominiums from improving processes related to governance. Use of condominium governance software, like condominium management software systems and electronic proxy software, can save condominium

managers significant time and effort from having to manually execute tasks.

Excuse #2: Our demographic is older and won’t embrace technology

I’ve heard the refrain again and again from condominium managers and board directors that their communities are not ready to embrace electronic forms of communication because of the advanced age of their residents. The 2017 Pew Research Center report on technology adoption among seniors has shown that the generational divide in internet usage no longer holds true, as 70% of individuals aged 65 and older now use the internet. With this in mind, any attestation that communities are not ready to come online is just a defense to continue doing things the way they have always done them. Our own data also shows this excuse to be false. The response rates for our electronic proxy system in buildings with older demographics matches our average across all clients.

Excuse #3: It’s too expensive to change

It’s too expensive not to – the new provisions under Bill 106 will increase communication requirements between owners and condominiums. Maintaining the status quo of printing and mailing governance notices will substantially increase costs. Bill 106 recognizes this issue and

will include changes to allow for governance communications to be sent electronically. A simple way to transition to electronic communication is by collecting and maintaining an email list of owners and residents. Another approach is to use condominium governance software. While the initial cost and time to set-up the system is not trivial, once implemented, condominium governance software translates into considerable time and cost savings. An additional benefit of electronic communication is addressing the common complaint from owners about the perceived lack of communications from the board. I have seen firsthand the uptick in owner engagement and the immediate cost savings from not having to provide hardcopies of notices to residents. More importantly, resident satisfaction often improves once corporations begin regularly communicating through electronic means.

Nothing can slow down the innovative and progressive leaps that we have seen with technology. By modifying one’s mindset from resisting change to taking proactive steps to become educated and adopting some of the new emerging technologies, this will help prevent condominiums from being left behind by aging technology, and from stagnating a condominium manager’s personal development and skills. **CV**