

The background features a clipboard with a checklist on the left side, showing several items with blue checkmarks. A pen is visible on the right side of the clipboard. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange rectangle. A vertical blue bar is positioned to the left of the title text.

How to Make Condo Boards Successful: The Ultimate Checklist

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2019



What makes a condo board successful?

One of the questions I'm often asked is what makes a condo board successful. I've been in the thick of things as President of my condo board, and I've spoken to people involved with dozens of other condo boards. From that experience, I've compiled the ultimate checklist of best practices for condo boards to make them stand out from the rest. In no particular order, here are my top suggestions:



I always say that good governance begins with good policies.

1. Introduce sound policies

Good governance begins with good policies. Every condo board needs to have policies in place for governance, finances, and communication. Check out the links at the end for more details on each category!

2. Aim for a balance of director expertise

Condo boards don't get to handpick their directors, but every board can strive for a balance of skills and expertise. For example, it can be helpful to have a director that understands the legal side of things and another with a background in financial management or accounting.

3. Add officers to bring in needed skill sets

Officers do not vote and are not elected, so there is much more freedom with their selection. Once the board is elected, the directors can appoint officers to fill any gaps in expertise. Being an officer for a year or so is also valuable training before becoming a director. Adding officers lightens the overall work load of the board and when specific skills are needed their knowledge can be extremely valuable.

4. Create committees

Anyone can be on a committee. I've seen many condo boards that have created committees for things like organizing social events, looking after gardens, and writing newsletters. Because committee members don't have to be official board members, this is a fantastic way to get new people involved. I recommend including a board member or officer on each committee, to liaise between the board and the committee. If this isn't possible, consider asking the committee chair to attend board meetings whenever an update is required.



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5. Have written job descriptions for director positions

Current or potential directors may not know what is required of a President or a Treasurer. Giving every director a clearly defined role results in a board that understands their respective responsibilities.

6. Don't leave positions vacant

Appointing a new director as soon as a position becomes vacant is a good practice. It is not easy to find a new director but the sooner a replacement is appointed the better. There is always a concern that the remaining directors will be overworked (and then also leave the board) because too much is expected of them. Directors are volunteers and are already making a significant time commitment to serve on the board.

7. Make documents available before being asked

Make all relevant documents available to everyone. I have mentioned this before, and I will keep mentioning it until it becomes common practice. Transparency is key.



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8. Keep corporate records organized and accessible

Condo records – like meeting minutes and financial statements – are crucial to a condo corporation. These records must be organized, up-to-date, and easily accessible to everyone who needs them. Directors must remember to start saving corporate records as soon as they join the board – if they wait until they leave the board, it will be too late.

9. Practice consistent and reasonable rule enforcement

Condos have lots and lots of rules. Enforcing all these rules is not so easy. Rule enforcement requires two key aspects. Being consistent and being reasonable. Being consistent means that rules are applied equally with all the owners. No one is granted special permission to ignore a rule. Being reasonable means that after an owner is informed of a rule violation, he or she is given a reasonable amount of time to fix the problem before the board takes the next step.

10. Commit to proactive maintenance

It pays to be proactive. Maintaining building systems proactively identifies small problems before they become giant disasters. Conducting annual inspections of major building systems costs money in the short-term, but pays off in the long run. I know the board of a high-rise condo that replaces the filters in every unit on an annual basis. Replacing the filters improves furnace efficiency and prevents damage to more expensive parts. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

What should condo boards strive for?

Overall, condo boards should strive for balance, proactivity, and transparency. Having the proper balance of skills and understanding ensures that the board is knowledgeable and able to get the job done. Proactivity and transparency keeps minor issues from becoming more significant. By following this checklist, every condo can be successful.

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