









### IN THIS ISSUE

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### A Season of Warmth and Welcome

Summer arrives with a steady grace, Bringing sunlight to every space. Longer days and skies so clear. A vibrant season now draws near. Balconies bloom, the courtyards thrive, Our shared spaces come alive. Neighbors meet with a friendly smile, Pausing to chat and stay awhile. Warm evenings with a gentle breeze, The rustle of leaves in nearby trees. It's a time for rest, renewal, cheer— The very best days of the year. As we enjoy this summer bright, Let's care for each space in shared delight. Together we make this place a home, No matter the season, wherever we roam.

# Nadlan harris is excited to share our 2025 Summer Newsletter with the Board of Directors!

It highlights key updates, goals, and upcoming initiatives as we embrace the season of growth and renewal. I encourage you all to take a moment to review it, as it's filled with valuable information for the upcoming months.









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### A different landscape

Since 2020, massive workplace shifts have forced employers to rethink how they attract, hire, and manage their teams. Jasmyn Sylvester, CPM®, ACoM®, director of property management for LBX Investments, says no amount of prediction or planning could have prepared companies for the curveballs thrown. "The unexpected changes have forced property managers and property management firms to consider how we are showing up and engaging with our property types, the consumers, and employees," she says. "However, when it comes to hiring, our needs haven't changed: We need qualified people who are great at what they do. It may not mean they have a finance degree, but can they complete the function today? Are they personable? Do they have the emotional intelligence to communicate with tenants? These are the qualities we need." While the job qualifications haven't changed, worker preferences and average job tenure have

"From my perspective, the biggest change since COVID has been the acceptance of job-hopping," says Craig Marquardo, vice president of multifamily at VCS Commercial Realty. "Before COVID, longevity at a position had value, and that doesn't seem to be a priority anymore. More employees are leaving positions after only six months."

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics supports this observation. According to its data, the median number of years that wage and salary workers had been with their current employer was 3.9 in January 2024, down from 4.1 years in January 2022 and the lowest since January 2002. Other worker preferences that have become more prominent in recent years include high pay, investing in their future, and f lexible work arrangements

We need qualified people who are great at what they do. It may not mean they have a f inance degree, but can they complete the function today? —Jasmyn Sylvester, CPM®, ACoM®, LBX Investments Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics supports this

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Get creative in your search. While job boards, LinkedIn, and other online options can effectively advertise your open positions, boots-onthe-ground recruiting and working your own network can put you face-to-face with high-quality candidates, especially for smaller companies. "A lot of hiring in this industry is still done through word of mouth," Marquardo says. "If someone has a good reputation, they'll get calls about new opportunities even if they're not actively looking." While working your network, cast a wide net at reputable institutions to ensure you're reaching high-quality talent in your area. "Don't stunt your capabilities by just reaching out to PWIs [predominantly white institutions]," Sylvester says. "Include trade organizations, local junior colleges, and HBCUs [historically Black colleges and universities]. You'll want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to play in this field so you can get the best and the brightest. Don't shoot yourself in the foot by being short-sighted." And don't forget that satisfied employees make the best marketers. Engage your current employees to see if they recommendations for open roles. "Happy employees want to work with good people who also want to work with good people," Sylvester says.

## Do your homework.

Before you even post or mention your job opening, be clear on what you are hiring for, Marquardo urges. Look at the job's required tasks and be very clear about the job title—creating a new one if necessary.

"One example I see a lot is management companies hiring for an assistant portfolio manager with no property management training. The job description reads more like a portfolio manager's assistant than an assistant portfolio manager. As a result, property managers call the portfolio manager and end up talking to the assistant, who has less experience than they do, hoping to get answers for them. It becomes very inefficient. We need to be very clear about the position we are hiring for."



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When an employer begins interviewing candidates, it can be challenging to ascertain past work performance. Marguardo says many companies cannot give information on a former employee's performance; they can only verify employment dates. "Employers must ask highly specific questions during interviews to assess how a candidate might manage people or the building," he says. Also, pay attention to the personality and interpersonal skills displayed during the interview. Reaching out to your network to vet a person's ability is also important. "Just like you can find out about a great potential employee, you'll also hear if someone has a bad reputation," Marguardo adds.

### Honor the new work preferences.

Whether employers are on board with flexible work policies and employees' preferences for remote or hybrid work, it's in their best interest to have an open mind when looking for the best worker. Sylvester and Marguardo agree that inflexible policies may shrink the talent pool. Sylvester observes that many employees wish to maintain work-life balance. Employers can foster this with a clear remote or in-office policy. "If you need them in the office sometimes, create a clear policy around that, such as a certain number of inoffice days, but give the team member a choice on which days they come in," she says. Another option is to be flexible about the times of day people work. Marguardo savs it's essential to evaluate each role individually to determine which must be performed in the office and which can be effectively completed offsite. Whether remote or hybrid, employers must foster a culture of collaboration where workers are fully supported by leadership and provided with the tools to do the job. "We have to make sure employees have what they need to be efficient while they are remote," Sylvester says. "There should be no qualms when they ask for something. 'Do you need a mouse? Would you like some screen lifters? You need a printer?' It's about ensuring they have what they need to be productive."

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### Invest in your employees.

Once employers make a hire, the most valuable thing they can do is strive to retain that team member.

Where to start? With a fair salary. Low wages can be disheartening for any employee, especially if they see employers throwing lavish happy hours or providing other expensive perks

"We talk about the benefits, but people have to live and care for themselves," Sylvester says. "Inflation, economics—things are getting more expensive—so pay people what they're worth'

She urges employers to examine the market, see what other organizations are paving their team members. and ensure that there are no pay discrepancies between genders, races, and other demographics. Next, find ways to invest in team members' careers and professional development. Sylvester says this type of investment is often more appreciated than even bonuses. "Provide them with education," she says. "Pay for their IREM membership or help fund their certification costs. Pay for them to go to the industry conferences." Marguardo agrees and adds that training and education help the larger organization. "I want to train my leasing agent to be an assistant manager and then a great property manager," Marquardo says. "I want my manager to become a great portfolio manager. We won't need to hire and train someone from the outside if we already have someone who knows our system. It also saves a lot on hiring costs."

And if you're unaware of what your workers need or desire, ask them



A lot of hiring in this industry is still done through word of mouth. If someone has a good reputation, they'll get calls about new opportunities even if they're not actively looking. —Craig Marguardo, **VCS** Commercial Realty



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# Solar-powered condo living at The Well

Amenities showcase comfort, convenience and decarbonization Wednesday, April 16, 2025
By Rebecca Melnyk

Balconies with built-in solar panels, smart lighting that mimics sunlight, and air filters that remove indoor pollutants on demand. These are just a few amenities on display at The Well's new self-powered condo unit in downtown Toronto. The Current Suite, as it's called, is located on the 22 floor of Tridel's Classic Series II property at Front Street and Spadina Avenue. The 1,080-square-foot residence is said to be the developer's most eco-friendly model yet—where health and wellbeing meets reduced energy use and carbon emissions through innovative technologies.

Graeme Armster, Tridel's director of innovation and sustainability, says the design builds upon lessons learned from three previous innovation suites, one of which is located in the developer's first smart condominium, 10 York; another in Aqualina at Bayside, the first high-rise condo in Toronto to earn LEED Platinum certification.

"The world is trying to transition to lower carbon energy sources, which right now means electrifying as much as possible," he says. "The concern is that, as we add more to the grid, we have to manage it more effectively and that's where the energy efficiency comes in."

A solar-powered battery can supply half of the suite's daily electricity consumption. Solar panels take up a seamless spot on the balcony railings and power a battery storage system, which feeds all the indoor HVAC equipment and LED lighting with DC power. The battery can provide up to 10 hours of electricity during power outages and charge overnight during off-peak hours.



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"We have the ability to consume free energy from the solar or cheap energy at two cents per kilowatt-hour, if you're on an ultra low off-peak program," said Armster. "The savings are quite drastic."

A power-over-ethernet system, which has traditionally been used for distributing the internet, sends data and electricity to devices around the home, bringing various control capabilities like customizable LED fixtures that match ambient lighting to human circadian rhythms.



Classic Series 2 condo at The Well. Photo by Tridel.

Light and temperature are primary synchronizers of the body's circadian rhythm, which regulates the sleepwake cycle and is tied to a person's 24-hour body clock.

"In the morning, the sun rises and delivers warmer orange-yellow hues, which wake us in a calm fashion," explains Armster. "By noon, you start to get those colder white lights that are bright. The orange hues keep us relaxed; the blue cold light keeps us focused and awake. We have the ability to control that in the suite."

Once occupants program their longitude and latitude, indoor lighting will naturally match all the colours of the sun according to its location and allow for remote control. A "good morning" mode will open blinds and prompt light fixtures to create the feel of a rising sun. This is particularly beneficial during dark winter days. Another feature breaks occupants out of their circadian rhythms; for instance, creating white light for focused work sessions after sunset.

To deliver heating and cooling to the suite, a multi-flow fan coil unit works more efficiently using a six-way valve. Typically, the fan blows air through two coils when only one is being used to heat or cool. In this case, one of the coils is omitted and the valve connects to a smart thermostat.

"That thermostat will tell the valve to send hot water or cold water to the coil. Now, we're using a single coil to deliver either heating or cooling," explains Armster. "Less material means less embodied carbon, it's more energy efficient and saves money."

In place of a gas-powered boiler, a smart electric hot water heater in the suite allows for remote monitoring and control, while a heat pump dryer prevents exterior venting and improves air tightness. To further reduce energy waste, during the contraction phase, a blower door test assessed where air leakage was occurring. A spray gun then shot out fine particulate matter to plug up those crevices and holes, improving the air tightness of the suite by 50 per cent, while boosting air quality and preventing sound and odour infiltration.



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In the kitchen, a ventless range hood and charcoal filter eliminate the need for exterior venting. Photo by Tridel.

An energy recovery ventilator (ERV) exchanges air to ventilate the suite. In this case, the ERV is connected to a sensor that measures CO2 levels. "If the CO2 gets too high the ERV kicks on," explains Armster. ""It's right-sizing the solution for the problem. We're getting perfect ventilation in the unit and perfect air quality and oxygen levels without comprising energy."

On top of that, a separate sensor, tied directly to a charcoal hepa filter, measures volatile organic compound levels and particulate levels. The system runs high or low depending on the indoor air quality.

Yet another feature is a wastewater heat recovery system that captures and repurposes thermal energy from sanitary drainage.

Coils around the drain absorb heat from flowing hot water and pre-heat the incoming cold water before it reaches the hot water tank, minimizing energy waste.

#### **Cutting Carbon**

Due to carbon intensive features like solar panels and batteries the suite had slightly higher emissions from the start. Yet other components, such as the electric hot water tank, reduce carbon. "Just through your operational savings, when you hit the 105-day mark of living in this unit, you'll start to have a lower carbon footprint than your neighbour or other average condo units in the city," says Armster.

The plan is to sell the condo unit and retrieve feedback and real testing data to enhance other projects. "We're so happy with some of these features that we're going to roll them into future developments," says Armster. "We've already learned a lot."



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# Elevator safety enforcers to impose new fines

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Inadequately monitoring elevator technicians' credentials could have financial consequences for multifamily landlords, condominium corporations and long-term care home and student residence operators in Ontario, as of June 9, 2025. That's when the provincial Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is scheduled to begin imposing fines, known as administrative penalties, which were established in a 2021 enabling regulation.

Building owners/managers are already required to comply with the underpinning safety requirements for elevating devices, but the new fines are described as an "enforcement tool" for the TSSA. The regulation stipulates that elevating device owners are responsible for ensuring that:

- all contractors involved in installing or altering those devices hold TSSA licences; and
- only certified mechanics or mechanics-in-training under the supervision of a TSSA licence-holder undertake work on an elevating device.

Non-compliance with either of those requirements will warrant fines of \$3,000 per contravention for subject elevating device owners and \$5,000 per contravention for subject contractors. Other individuals deemed to be party to non-compliance could be fined \$1,000 per contravention.

An additional \$5,000 fine will come into force for contractors who fail to submit a written report to the TSSA within 24 hours of being informed about an injury or death related to an elevating device they are contracted to maintain.

"This enforcement tool will be applied as a measure to strengthen compliance with regulatory requirements and enhance public safety across Ontario," the TSSA advises. "The administrative penalties will be imposed when a business or an individual fails to comply with the safety requirements."



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# Risk management tips for gardening committees

Ensuring a safe environment for condo volunteers Monday, May 5, 2025

By Ashley Winberg

Condominium corporations are often seeking innovative ways to enhance the aesthetic appeal of their properties and foster community engagement among residents. One effective approach is the implementation of volunteer gardening committees; however, it is imperative that corporations balance the benefits with effective risk management strategies to ensure a safe environment for all volunteers and to limit the corporation's exposure to potential liability.

### 1. Garden Committee Policy

To ensure that a volunteer garden committee operates effectively and within their authority, it is imperative that a corporation first create a garden committee policy.

This policy should outline the scope of the committee's responsibilities, including specific tasks they are authorized to perform and areas they are allowed to work on. It should also detail the process for selecting committee members and the duration of their service. The policy should also stipulate that every committee member must provide the corporation with an executed copy of the related waiver and acknowledgement, which should be included as a schedule to the policy, prior to engaging in any committee-related activities.



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#### 2. Waiver

Corporations owe a duty of care under the Occupiers' Liability Act, 1990, R.S.O. 1990 c. O.2 to take reasonable steps to protect people from foreseeable harm while on the corporation's common elements. Corporations, however, can restrict, modify and exclude this duty of care vis-a-vie waivers of liability.

To mitigate potential liability, corporations should require volunteers to sign a waiver and acknowledgement that clearly outlines the risks involved in the committee-related activities to be undertaken and state that volunteers assume responsibility for any and all injuries or damage that may occur in relation to the committee-related activities that they take part in.

#### 3. Committee Chair

By appointing a member of the board to act as the chair of the committee, the corporation will be better equipped to oversee committee activities, ensure that it is complying with the related policy, and promote effective communication between the board and the committee.

#### 4. Insurance

Acts and omissions of volunteers may not be covered by insurance policies that a corporation maintains. To get around this issue, a corporation could appoint individual committee members as officers of the corporation vis-vis a board resolution, in which case their acts and omissions would thereafter likely be covered by the corporation's directors' and officers' liability insurance.

To ensure that a corporation's insurer does not deny any potential claims under the corporation's general liability and property insurance, it would be wise for a corporation to notify its insurer of the gardening tasks that the committee has been granted the authority to perform, as well as the policies implemented by the corporation to manage the activities of the committee and action taken to limit the corporation's exposure to potential liability.

By implementing the risk management strategies discussed above, corporations will be able to limit their risk exposure while at the same time promoting community engagement and improving the aesthetic appeal of their property.

Ashley Winberg is one of the leading condominium lawyers in Ontario and is the head of corporate practice at Pulver on Condos, which is a boutique condominium law firm that provides specialized legal services to condominium corporations and unit owners throughout Ontario. Ashley can be reached at ashley@pulveroncondos.com.

