

Publication Date: 18 July 2018
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

Listen to this podcast episode [here](#).

Intro: Welcome to Your Strata Property. The podcast for property owners looking for reliable, accurate, and bite-sized information from an experienced and authoritative source. To access previous episodes and useful strata tips, go to www.yourstrataproperty.com.au.

Amanda Farmer: Hello, and welcome. I'm Amanda Farmer, and this is Your Strata Property. Dino Biordi has a 20-year history across several services in the building and construction industry, with a focus on plumbing, gas, and central heating services. The history has been his springboard to discovering his passion in the building and facilities management space. Dino launched LUNA, The Building Management Company, in July 2015 in response to people requesting quality service with a difference. LUNA provides professional building managers that are both proactive and passionate about making a positive difference to buildings, people, and communities. Today, I am delighted to welcome Dino Biordi of LUNA, The Building Management Company. Hi, Dino.

Dino Biordi: Hello, Amanda. Thank you so much for having me here on your podcast. As you know, I'm a big fan of yours, and I'm super excited to be here with you, and I hope that I can add some value to your audience.

Amanda Farmer: Absolutely. I'm sure you can. Thank you so much for joining us. Now, I hope you'll forgive me for saying, Dino, that we have tried to coordinate this interview a couple of times now, but because of busy schedules and some technology glitches, I'm not naming names here, but we do have problems with NBN and the wonderful Sydney internet or lack thereof. We finally made it happen, so really excited to have you with us to chat about all things building and facilities management.

Dino Biordi: One thing I do know, Amanda, when you've got a contractor on site, one thing you don't want to do is usher them away, so yes, keep them on site and make sure they're doing, keep doing what they're doing.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. Definitely. If anyone can hear a little bit of noise in the background, it's not my fault, I promise. It's necessary work that must be done. Such are the joys of living in strata. We'll do our best.

Dino Biordi: Exactly.

Amanda Farmer: All right. Let's start, Dino, with having you tell us why good building management is essential for people living in strata.

Dino Biordi: Amanda, good building management is critical because we are effectively responsible for a portfolio worth millions, if not tens of millions, of dollars. Owners in strata committees have every right to expect a high level of professional services with such a critical, delicate, and sometimes emotional built environment. We are talking about people, families, babies, teenagers, moms and dads, the disabled, the elderly. They all live in strata buildings. I mean, we are privileged, as building managers, to be looking after such a sacred place. It's a place that people call home. We have a massive responsibility here. People living in strata just want to know that their homes, investment nest egg, are being looked after.

In this built environment, building management companies are responsible for people's safety, both residents and the visitors that come to site, and a contract is when you invite to site to perform the works. People's security, we ensure that they feel safe within the community they're living, and when they fall asleep, they feel secure. Particularly in operations within the building and all the assets within the building, we want to ensure that we get the right service providers on site or the joint effort to add value to not only ensuring that the operations are in line with the appropriate maintenance, working efficiently and effectively, but we don't blow any budgets, that we have an expenditure and a budget we need to uphold. This takes skill. If there is a blowout, this can cause stress in people's lives. People today, they have enough work and family commitments. They shouldn't have to need to worry about whether they can trust their building manager wholeheartedly. Owners need to know that their building management company is representing them at all times with integrity, honesty, and due diligence. It is a big commitment.

Amanda Farmer: That is a huge job. I often say that strata managers have a hard task, and there's a lot that's asked of them.



Publication Date: 18 July 2018
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

From what I'm hearing here, Dino, building managers, I think, are going to be my new heroes. That's- a very long list of skills and a very long to-do list.

Dino Biordi: Yes. Look, in terms of building management, it's a very unique industry. I think the skillset that is required is underestimated and sometimes undervalued.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. It was only last Friday I was chatting to a building manager who was giving me some information that I needed for an owners corporation, and I think it was about 4:00 on Friday, and he finally returned my call. I said, "How are you?" He said, "Stressed." I said, "Oh, it's 4:00 on a Friday. What are you stressed about? Surely, it's nearly knock-off time." He said, "Not for a building manager." He said, "I've been-"

Dino Biordi: No.

Amanda Farmer: " ... wrapped up in something else, and all I've got on my phone are messages, and I haven't even sat down at my desk."

Dino Biordi: It is textbook, Friday afternoon, we get the call. We don't have the luxury of turning our phones off, unfortunately.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. Yes. You're definitely hard workers. You've given us there a list of some of the things that building managers do, and there's real insight there into how you actually impact people's lives day to day. It's not just about keeping the building running. It's really about keeping people's lives running smoothly and looking after families, and I really like that perspective. Can you give us sort of the, a day in the life of yourself as a building manager, or your team? What does a good building manager look like? What does their day look like? What skills are they relying on every day, and think about maybe people listening who might want to become building managers or have a closer look at that industry? What kind of attributes are going to be key for a person in that role?

Dino Biordi: A good building management company, I'd judge it by the people that work for them, the actual building managers. Outside of building management, requirements or building managers' knowledge in the industry, we know they've got to have a baseline understanding on how the building operates, but outside of that, there are two main attributes that I look for in a building manager. It's something that I've hired people, and I've made mistakes, and I've learnt, what are the attributes that are required absolutely patience. It's really having a positive attitude and a curiosity in nature. Those 2 buckets are big for me.

When we talk about attitudes, what I look for is, is that candidate or the building manager, do they complain and blame, or do they provide solutions? Do they look outside themselves? What I mean by that, do they have a real social awareness, awareness around how they impact others and the environment that they're around and realise their full potential? For me, I need to know that, with that attitude, that these buildings managers or candidates, they have a genuine want to listen to people and want to make an impact. I think that's very important. Today, they call it emotional intelligence and empathy. I think that is paramount. It's a must today.

In terms of building management, it's so sophisticated today that you've just got to have that positive attitude, that can-do attitude, the emotional intelligence, and the empathy to listen, because a lot of it is management and of people. That's the variable, the people. The system and the processes are there, they're quite easy to follow, but you got the variabilities of people, and everyone's different, and everyone interacts differently.

Amanda Farmer: I think, Dino, if I can just jump in there, if you have those skills, if you're the type of person who has those people skills and that positive attitude, and you're clearly doing what you love every day, you're going to have that longevity in the job as well. I'm sure you-

Dino Biordi: That's right.



Publication Date: 18 July 2018

YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

Amanda Farmer: ... as a business owner, that's something that is key to you and really valuable, but also, as a building, as a strata community, when you're looking to hire someone, people might come to you, committees, strata managers might come to you, LUNA, and say, "Look, we'd like to have you guys manage our building," and you might put forward one of your team, and you really want, and the building really wants, the strata manager really wants that person to stay in that role for as long as possible and to be really invested in the community and in the day-to-day.

Dino Biordi: Absolutely. 100%, Amanda. When you talk about those attributes you just talked about, I redistilled it to the attitude, having that someone with the right mind set and the right attitude, that understanding what that is and what that looks like is paramount. Then second to that, Amanda, is, are they curious in nature? For me, once the attitude is there, success then comes from skillset and training. There is no doubt that people with the right diplomas and certificates in FM, in building management, are very good. FM is in facilities management, and BM is in building management, but if you're curious in nature, people will naturally want to grow, learn, and evolve. People with little experience in building management, however, interested in their work, will be on their way to be a good building manager within a very short time. I have seen that, and it's great.

When people genuinely have an interest in their industry and in growth, and developmental, and they obviously want to upskill professionally and personally, they end up being the high performers. For me, it's known or expected today that a building manager has a trade background. Yes, there's value there. I've got a trade background, and that has added so much value, but I've seen very good building managers that come from different sectors, accounting backgrounds, strata management background, hospitality, concierge.

The flip side to this, Amanda, is, and I've met building managers with over 10 years, even 2 decades' worth of experience in the industry, and I've not hired them. Set in their ways. I think the skillset, you really want someone that knows how to manage people. That's really fundamental. Can they manage people? That's the volatility. That's the variable that I see in building management. If they've been in senior roles, and they've successfully managed teams of people, if they've owned businesses, then generally you have a good skillset for that built environment.

Amanda Farmer: Now, we'll have some listeners who may be living in a building where they have a building manager, they know exactly what it is that the building manager does, why they're there, and we'll have buildings that have perhaps never heard of a building manager. What kind of a building, is it only large buildings? Is it only prestigious buildings that have building managers? Is it a full-time job? Is it a part-time job? Can you give us just a bit of an outline of the different ways that building managers can service different types of buildings?

Dino Biordi: Sure. Amanda, it really depends on the service level that the customer's looking for or the strata committee looking for, the group of owners. To give you an example of this, I've seen buildings with 60 apartments, and they don't have a building manager. They just have a strata manager. Yes, I do think it's crazy, but they have a strata manager that sometimes visits or not, and they try to manage that from a distance, from their office and organise all the contractors that come on site. I have a site that has 8 apartments and a full-time concierge building manager.

It really depends on the service level of what the customers are looking for, but I will say this. Whether it's 10 apartments, 30 apartments, or 100 apartments, they generally have the same assets, given that they're a multi-story, large structure with a lift and some pumps. They generally have the same assets, and the same care is required. It really baffles me when someone goes, "Oh, look, we don't need a building manager. We only have 35 apartments," but the same care is needed, it really is, to really prolong the life of those assets.

Amanda Farmer: It is possible, in my experience, what I see with contracts that come across my desk and communicating with building managers, it is possible to have a part-time building manager or a casual sort of-

Dino Biordi: Absolutely.

Amanda Farmer: ... on call-



Publication Date: 18 July 2018
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

Dino Biordi: Absolutely.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. That might be a solution for those buildings who think maybe their needs are a little bit less than full-time. It's certainly possible to still get that value from a building manager on different terms.

Dino Biordi: Yes, absolutely. We've got the smallest slice that we have, they're absolutely part-time, but 2 hours a week where we go to site where we do an inspection weekly to make sure that everything is running okay, there's no leaks, there's nothing that needs replacing, but the extra hour that we use is to organise the work that comes up should something arise during that week.

Even for the smaller sites, there is room to have it just a couple of hours for our building managers to show up and just make sure you have a maintenance plan in place. They're checking the work, and you have someone that's working for the strata committee and knows what the strata committee is looking for in terms of the right people and getting the work done. Within the right price, of course.

Amanda Farmer: Being on-site, I think, is key. As you say, that's often the-

Dino Biordi: Yes.

Amanda Farmer: ... difference with the strata manager who is often sitting behind the desk and not necessarily visiting the site and not being able to solve those problems first-hand.

Dino Biordi: It horrifies me, some of the stories I hear. I do hear that sometimes that strata managers don't even show up-

Amanda Farmer: Oh, yes.

Dino Biordi: ... and they-

Amanda Farmer: I believe that.

Dino Biordi: Yes, it's just crazy.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. All right. Have you got any stories for us, Dino, some buildings that you've been working with where your building management skills have been able to achieve a great result for them that you'd like to share with us?

Dino Biordi: Yes, so one that comes to mind, I helped owners create just basic stuff. When we come on site, we quite easily make a huge difference. We put together a building management plan. I was invited to a building and discovered they didn't have just a basic photographic asset register, no critical asset plan with a mud mapping. I mean, they didn't know where their critical assets were to shut down the power, the water, the gas, your main services. There was no proactive maintenance plan in place, so we'll then, we created one. We're making a massive difference or massive impact straightaway, off the bat.

I explained to the strata community that it shouldn't be just reactive maintenance, that we need to be proactive about maintaining a building and the services within that. I'll also help them start the discussion of what vision they had for their building and what their ultimate goal was, and then choosing a roadmap that also was in line with their finances. I think a lot of strata communities don't have that conversation, and if they don't have that conversation, what happens is, the building managers aren't led quickly, and it's hard to steer the ship or know which direction if they don't have that conversation to start with.

Then further to that, look, I remember receiving a call from a strata committee member who told me, "*Look, they're looking for a new building management company.*" They approached me, and they said, "*Look, we'd like you to have a look at our building and see if you'd like to look after our building for us. We're not happy with the previous building management company. Here's your admin budget,*" and they were hoping that I could have a look at it and with my experience help them with an administration

Publication Date: 18 July 2018
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

budget. Because of the size, I had similar-size projects within my portfolio, so I said, *"Not a problem. I'll look at it."*

After spending some time with it, looking at the most cost-effective options in line with the proactive maintenance, the budget I was proposing was 2 times more than the recommendation they put forward, so you can imagine I was reluctant to send this through to the strata committee, because they see what their budget is, they see what the new building management company comes through and puts one forward, and they see it's double the price. To my delight and my surprise, I was given thanks and praise. They just had no idea what assets were in their building and what maintenance was required to maintain it. Believe it or not, there had been a building management company there previously to us commencing, and it's just crazy.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. I wouldn't be surprised that there would be many buildings out there who have ineffective, let's say, building managers who are there simply because they've been there for many, many years, have become perhaps a bit relaxed, a bit complacent, and the committee also becoming a bit complacent and perhaps not realising the value there is to be obtained from having a more proactive, more skilful, switched-on building manager. It's also a good reminder for committees out there to perhaps remember to reassess your building management contracts in the same way that you might with your strata management contract and make sure you're always getting the best value and the best service.

Dino Biordi: Yes, Amanda, I'm not sure why, but there seems to be a hesitation around changing managers, whether it be strata or building management. I struggle to understand why, but, in fairness, when I do go through the handover process, I see the unprofessionalism that happens in that handover process where they try and keep a lot of the intellectual properties that actually is owned by the owners. It's sad to see, but at the end of the day, if there is underperformance, and they've had warnings, and they've had chances to perform, you got a massive portfolio, look after your nest, and look after your investment. Get someone else in who's interested in that building and then will look after you.

Amanda Farmer: Absolutely. Dino, what kind of obstacles do you find building managers coming up against when they're working, perhaps, with strata communities or owners, and likewise, what obstacles are owners, perhaps, coming up against when they're working with building managers, and how do you suggest that they overcome those?

Dino Biordi: In terms of a building manager, some of the things that we find that are obstacles and that should be looked at very closely in showing that any defects that, arisen, especially in new buildings, that the building manager captures all the defects in line with the photographic evidence, and with that, they are constantly ensuring that the works have been carried out, and they don't drag on, and they're working with the consultants, with capturing all the methodology as well. Finding good service providers is important, hauling that they are a stakeholder and in the efforts of maintaining the building, and ensuring that they have paid in a timely manner I think is important. I think people underestimate when you find good service providers that it's important to understand their terms as well as ours and that we do provide that professional treatment, respect, and pay them within a good time.

Good relationships need to be recognised as good business. When things do go dramatically wrong on sites, when there's a water burst, and there's a flood, you're going to ask these service providers to come on site and go on beyond the call of duty. They're going to come in the middle of the night. They're going to fix the leak and get you back online. I think it's important to build that co-op with their service providers, build that strong team. Then with the strata committees, I think there needs to be more focus on knowing their residents, and building managers included. We need to help. We need to know who lives in building, and in the building, and this procedure is required to ensure residents, are filling out a form, an ID form, and then we get registration perhaps the next of kin.

This allows to really bring up the security of the building. Sometimes, this is overlooked, and people are worried about the confidentiality of losing their information to the building management company, but we got to keep that safe. We're going to keep that secure. We just want to make sure we know who's on-site, and then the idea is to keep everyone else safe with that information.

Amanda Farmer: That's another long list of things to do and steps to take for both building managers and for committees. It's not a

Publication Date: 18 July 2018

YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

quick decision, I suppose, to get involved with a new building manager or a building manager full stop, and there's a lot of things to cover off. Someone who's thinking about hiring a building manager or perhaps taking some steps, let's say, to ensure their current building manager is more effective, what would you say the single first thing is that they should do? What's a quick action step, a quick win that they might get on the board?

Dino Biordi: Look, firstly, what I would always say is, try and work with the building manager you have. I think it's important that we want to work as a team. What I would say is, go down there and just ask for a few things, like safety is paramount, so the first thing I would be doing is saying, "Okay, hello, Mr Building Manager. Hi. How are you? But where is your contractor register, and where are the site inductions?" Just get them to, go through the process of getting them to pull that out, and they actually have a look if they're current, making sure they've got all the certificate of currencies for the insurances. The service providers need to have that. We need to, as building managers, ensure that they're current to make sure we're covered in terms of insurances. Also, this gets a conversation going to get things in order. I do highly recommend each strata scheme purchase a copy of the Australian Building Management Code. You've had Linda on your podcast. She's great.

The ABMA, you put that under your armpit, you walk down there, you open up the page, and you just say, "Hey, look, this is a procedure here that we would like to see on our site. Can you show me where that is?" It's really simple. You go through it, and the idea here is to just, not to crucify anyone, but just to build that strong management team and to really have the building manager, well, to give him a chance to perform. Then we can start monitoring whether you are building a strong team and a successful building or that your building manager's just not interested, and you do start to need to look at going to really putting together a scope of work to go to tender. You might need someone like a strata manager to help you put together a tender document to go to the market and have building managers not only the ones that are recommended but really go to the market and put a tender document forward for the market to respond to.

Amanda Farmer: Some great tips there and some very clear steps that our buildings can start taking to work with their current building manager or find a new one. Thanks for those, Dino. You're a regular podcast listener. You'll know this question. You'll be prepared for it. What books have had the greatest impact on you, and why?

Dino Biordi: Amanda, this is the hardest question.

Amanda Farmer: Really?

Dino Biordi: There are just so many books that have affected me. I love books. I'm into them big time. I didn't really start reading until my 20s. I went through school not really enjoying school, and I love education now later in my life. I mean, maybe it's a boy thing. Maybe it's just me, but I'm really loving education as a mature student, but I am curious in nature.

Look, I have to put forward a book I read just in the recent years called Unbeatable Mind. It's by Commander Mark Divine, Navy SEAL. It isn't for everyone. Mark Divine, at 26, he graduated as an Honour Man, ranked number one trainee, of Navy SEAL BUD/S in the USA. I mean, it's mental toughness, tapping into the limitless power of the mind. It's based on the Navy SEAL philosophy. It's a book that helped me raise my performance in mind, body, emotionally, and not only emotionally, but intuition, that something that's been, for me, pushed aside. I didn't realise men had intuition, so being able to understand that even warriors like a SEAL look to their intuition to make decisions. That was a book I read. It radically changed the way I think and position myself in the world. It helped me really cultivate my life's journey.

Amanda Farmer: Thank you so much for sharing that one. I'll make sure that there is a link to it in the show notes. Just addressing your comment, it's, you're not sure if it's a boy thing, I can assure you that self-education in your more mature years is not a boy thing. Girls, us girls, are definitely into that too. I was just thinking of a quote, and I think it's a quote from Jim Rohn. It is along these lines, "A formal education will get you a living. Self-education will get you a fortune."

Dino Biordi: Oh, that's great. Love it.



Publication Date: 18 July 2018
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

Amanda Farmer: I've also-

Dino Biordi: Love it, Amanda.

Amanda Farmer: ... got a book suggestion for you, Dino. I thought of this after we were having a chat at the last Women in Strata event, which LUNA very kindly supported for us. You were telling me how you were interested in this, the personal development side of things, and I have just finished a book by Aubrey Marcus which is called Own the Day, Own Your Life. I'm not sure if you've come across Aubrey Marcus, but I wouldn't be surprised if knowing you if you hadn't. Is it on your bookshelf?

Dino Biordi: It is. I've read it. I'm sorry.

Amanda Farmer: Sure. Yes. I should have mentioned it to you when we were having that chat, because it popped into my head only later, and I meant to text you about it. Yes. I'm not surprised that-

Dino Biordi: I'm-

Amanda Farmer: ... you've read-

Dino Biordi: ... a big fan.

Amanda Farmer: ... that one.

Dino Biordi: I'm a big fan of his-

Amanda Farmer: He's-

Dino Biordi: ... yes.

Amanda Farmer: ... very cool. He's definitely for the boys, speaking of boys and girls, but if you can kind of take the boy stuff out of it, I found that a really clever book.

Dino Biordi: Look, he's very alpha, but he's got this great feminine side to him. He's a beautiful man. There's no doubt about that.

Amanda Farmer: Yes, and very successful.

Dino Biordi: Yes.

Amanda Farmer: We'll-

Dino Biordi: Absolutely.

Amanda Farmer: ... pop a link to that one in the show notes, too. It's not every episode that you get a book recommendation from me, so that's a bit different.

Dino Biordi: I can back that one.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. Excellent.

Dino Biordi: It's a great book. I actually recommended it to a close friend of mine only a couple of days ago, so he's went out and just ordered it. I couldn't give away my copy. I just need to keep it.

Publication Date: 18 July 2018
YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi

Amanda Farmer: Do you know, I've-

Dino Biordi: It's a great reference-

Amanda Farmer: ... actually-

Dino Biordi: ... book as well.

Amanda Farmer: ... got it ... I've got it on audiobook, and I've got to go and buy the hard copy, because I've just spent the 8 hours odd listening to it in the car, and now I want to go back and actually look at it a bit closer, so I've got to go grab a copy.

Dino Biordi: I do that all the time. I often start with the audio version, and I know by chapter 3 or 4 if I want the hard copy. I generally have an audio copy of something. If it's good, I'll get the hard copy.

Amanda Farmer: Yes. That's a good tip. All right, Dino. We're going to wrap up very shortly, but before we do, let our listeners know how they can find out more about you, and please do add anything else.

Dino Biordi: Amanda, look if I can ask everyone to, if they want to look for me, just please type in the search or the web browser, luna.management. That's L-U-N-A dot management. You'll find our websites there. You'll find all our social media feed, which I'm a big fan of, allows me to sort of vent and let people know about my inner thoughts, whatever that may be. It's not just building management. I have a lot of disciplines and areas that I have positions on. It must be something that happens as you get older. You start to-

Amanda Farmer: You have opinions.

Dino Biordi: Have opinions, yes, and if I may, I just want to acknowledge you and your amazing contribution to the industry. You are truly doing great work, and I really do thank you, Amanda.

Amanda Farmer: Thank you very much. Anybody who listens to me on the podcast and is inside my member forum knows that I do this because I love it. I couldn't keep it up for over-

Dino Biordi: You can tell.

Amanda Farmer: ... 2 years now if I didn't love it, so-

Dino Biordi: It comes through. It's-

Amanda Farmer: No.

Dino Biordi: ... great. I love it.

Amanda Farmer: Thank you.

Dino Biordi: Yes. Well done.

Amanda Farmer: Thank you very much.

Dino Biordi: Keep it up.

Amanda Farmer: All right. I think that's it for this episode today. That has been a jam-packed one, Dino. I look forward to chatting

Publication Date: 18 July 2018
**YSP Podcast Transcript: Episode 121. The essentials of building management – with
Dino Biordi**

with you again soon.

Dino Biordi: Look, I just want to thank you also for the sound effects. I don't know where you get them from, but I think it was just perfect for the podcast.

Amanda Farmer: The sounds of strata.

Dino Biordi: Great.

Amanda Farmer: Thanks-

Dino Biordi: Take-

Amanda Farmer: ... Dino.

Dino Biordi: ... care, Amanda.

Amanda Farmer: Bye.

Dino Biordi: See you later. Bye-bye.

Outro: Thank you for listening to Your Strata Property, the podcast which consistently delivers to property owners reliable and accurate information about their strata property. You can access all the information below this episode by the show notes at www.yourstrataproperty.com.au. You can also ask questions in the comment section, which Amanda will answer in her upcoming episodes. How can Amanda help you today?

