

O'SHANTER DEVELOPMENT:

# THE ABC AND D'S TO CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT



**O'SHANTER**  
*Managing to do the right thing*

O'Shanter Development Company Ltd. has achieved another environmental milestone; Certification under the Certified Rental Building Program's new "Living Green Together" Environmental Standards of Practice.

This latest achievement complements a host of other environmental certifications and awards O'Shanter has accrued. This includes: being the first residential property management company in Canada to both achieve ISO 14001 Environmental Management and ISO 9001, Quality Management Certifications; being awarded the Environment Award of Excellence on behalf of the Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario (FRPO) and the Waste Minimization Award by the Recycling Council of Ontario. And these are just some of the accolades.

However, O'Shanter's success is not measured solely by these awards and certifications. It can be measured by their very real and tangible reductions in energy and water use, in impressive waste diversion efforts, and significant reductions in the company's carbon footprint.

What are the secrets to O'Shanter's environmental success? According to Adam Krehm, Principal at O'Shanter Development Company, there is no magic, secret or one size fits all solution. There is however a number of common sense approaches, that when combined with a corporate willingness to act, can and do make a difference.

The ABC and D's to Environmental Achievement are a simple way to outline these common sense approaches, policies and management strategies that have worked so successfully at O'Shanter. In a nutshell they are:

- "A"- Attitude and Awareness;**
- "B": Business Realities;**
- "C": Commitment and Convenience;**
- "D": Data and Dedicated Staff.**

Adam firmly believes attitudes are a key ingredient upon which success is built and that the 'right' attitude must start at the top. O'Shanter Development, like many organizations attempts to balance a host of competing strategic and operational priorities and financial demands. But when it comes to conservation and sustainability issues, what permeates the organization is an attitude of how can we make it work and what CAN we do vs. all the reasons why we can't do it.

This action-oriented "Can Do" attitude is combined with ongoing efforts to enhance staff and resident awareness about environmental issues. O'Shanter University, an internal resource for staff, which promotes on-going learning and awareness, as well as on-going communications with residents, are a few tried and true strategies O'Shanter uses to promote awareness, to engage staff and residents and to show we can all make a difference.



The “B”, in our ABC and D’s to Environmental Achievement stands for Business Realities. With ten year triple digit increases in water and electricity costs, few would argue that it does not make good business sense to find ways to reduce operating costs by lowering utility consumption. However, O’Shanter adds fuel to this well known argument.

O’Shanter’s experience is that for every dollar saved on energy operating costs, the value of the building increases by \$25 dollars. With this kind of hard fiscal reality, it’s hard to understand why businesses wouldn’t readily embrace conservation measures.

But it’s more than just money. Beyond the cost savings and increased equity that results from conservation efforts, the Krehm’s are the first to argue that as corporate citizens and as integral members of our communities we also have a social responsibility to address growing sustainability issues.

The “C”, in the O’Shanter formula stands for Commitment and Convenience. It means a commitment to quality and service, to community, and to investigating opportunities for improvement. It also means a commitment to act. However, action is not solely the responsibility of the property management company. Residents must also be onboard and convenience is a big part to ensuring their involvement. O’Shanter’s impressive portfolio-wide recycling rates well in excess of 70% are a testament to the benefits to investing in and finding ways to make recycling convenient for residents.

“Data” and a “dedicated team” are also critical pieces to the O’Shanter environmental success puzzle. O’Shanter prides itself on its dedicated team of staff, many of whom have been with the company for years. From O’Shanter’s

perspective, ‘dedicated’ refers to the commitment of staff to quality in service and to environmentally responsible building operations.

It also means having a specialized team of people whose focus is to investigate and act upon issues, to fine-tune existing strategies and to identify new opportunities. The availability and use of accurate well organized, utility and environmental performance data that has been collected over the past 30 years, is a vital element that assists O’Shanter in its quest for more sustainable building operations.

O’Shanter Development Company Ltd. embodies the principles of quality service and environmental responsibility. The Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario and its Certified Rental Building Program (CRBP) congratulate O’Shanter Development Company Ltd. on its recent certification under the “Living Green Together”/ CRB environmental standards of practice and for moving us all another step forward towards more sustainable multi-unit residential apartment living.

