

# Know What I'd Do If I Were You?

After a decade of advising service providers and property owners, the author is once again on the receiving end of advice. Helpful comments from readers are welcome!

By Bryan Rader / *Access Media 3*

**D**ispensing advice to someone else is so easy. People often say things to friends such as, “I’d get out of that toxic relationship right now,” or “Just tell your boss how you really feel. That’s what I’d do.”

Oh, yeah? Have you ever taken your own advice? It sure is easy to tell a friend what to do when you are not the one acting on the advice – whether it concerns a personal relationship, work or even a multiple-dwelling-unit (MDU) service provider issue. Yes, I said it. Service provider issues rank right up there with broken relationships and failure to get promoted.

I’ve been giving such advice for quite some time. As a consultant to dozens of service providers, developers, property owners and HOA boards, I’ve made recommendations and suggestions for the past decade. I’ve told people “what I would do if it were me.” Get out of that toxic relationship. Tell your board to switch. Add people to your team. Exit that market. Focus on this product. Drop that vendor.

Telling others what to do has been fun. At times I felt like Dear Abby or Dr. Laura. OK, maybe I wasn’t consulting on how to raise their kids or deal with difficult family members. But I sure did discuss building stronger teams, making tough decisions on contract terms and creating new marketing plans – and sometimes these discussions were filled with strong emotions, deep feelings and challenging situations.

Lots of relationship fixes, problem solving, bridge building, negotiating. Whatever was needed – I gave lots of advice.

But at the end of the day, they were only my suggestions, similar to something a friend would say during a workout or to a co-worker at lunch.

Dr. Phil might ask, “How does it make you feel when your friend does that?” I asked, “How does it make you feel when your MDU service provider does that?”

## BACK IN THE GAME

Now I am back in the game. I no longer give out suggestions or recommendations to others. I am back in the service provider business, and I’ve put away my notepad and gotten

off the couch. I am building plans, a new team and a new program, and I have to execute on my own advice. I am no longer the “Know what I’d do if I were you?” guy. I just became a player, not the coach.

So I went back and reread many of my columns. They were filled with advice for service providers or property owners trying to improve their MDU technology services. There were suggestions about company culture, product innovations, management tools, marketing strategies and niches to consider. I often discussed how to use the agility that comes with small size as a way to beat the bigs. I mentioned advancing relationships and improving customer satisfaction.

Lots of great ideas to follow, I thought. Now, I am beginning to figure out how to execute my own ideas. “Tell your mom why you never call anymore” is easy advice to deliver to someone else. But would you act on your own advice?

I find myself in that position now. If you can give advice to others, you should give it to yourself. (No, Mom, this was a purely hypothetical situation.)

I am very eager to step outside consulting and get back into the actual MDU battleground. I have learned so much from being on all sides of this industry over the years. But I think I actually learned the most by spending this time listening, discussing and brainstorming for my clients. I now plan to implement my own recommendations.

This new chapter will cover some exciting challenges that I am very familiar with – branding, staffing, shifting the culture, improving client care, creating road maps, and developing and growing the business again. I’m excited to take you on this journey with me.

I welcome your advice, as we can all learn from one another. I would appreciate it if you sent me a note that started with, “You know what I’d do if I were you?” ❖

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