

# THE ORSID

— DIGEST —

## Q4 Newsletter

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## Recognizing Bianca Taveras

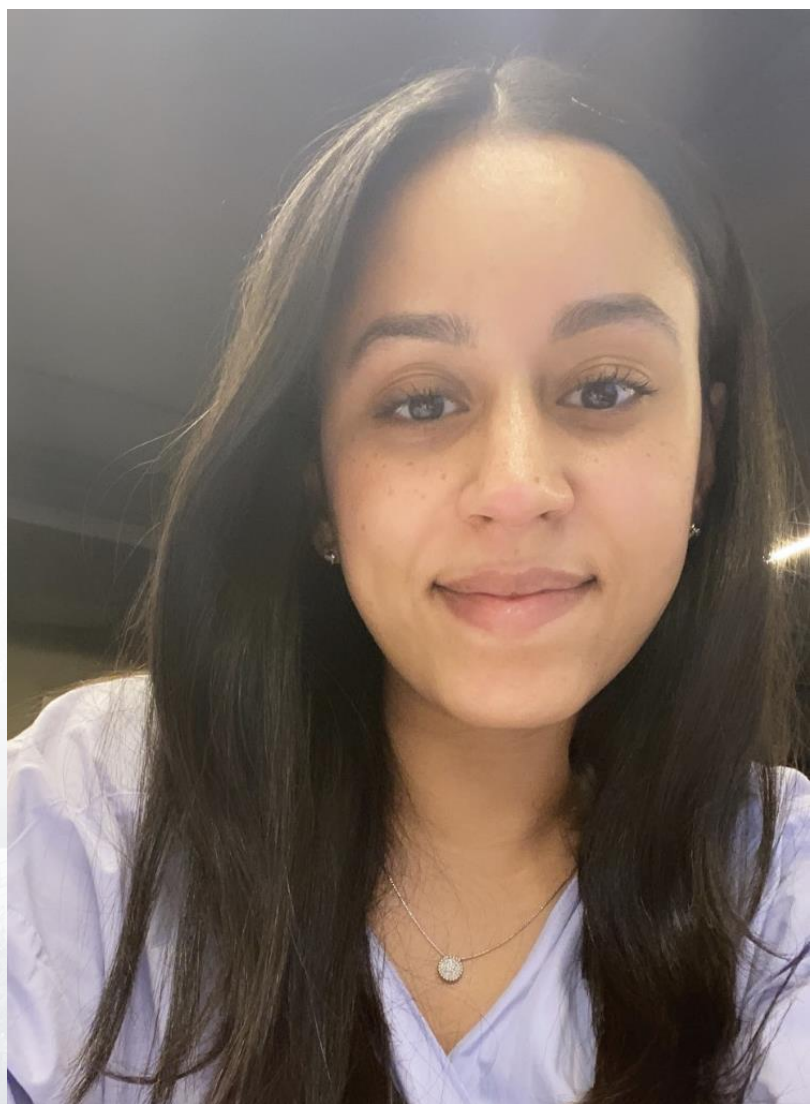
Bianca Taveras, currently an Account Executive, started out at Orsid in 2013 as a fresh-faced Administrative Assistant, brand new to the property management industry and eager to learn. She stayed in that role for three years, working hard to learn the ins and outs of the business. In 2016, Orsid President Neil Davidowitz asked Bianca if she was interested in becoming an Account Executive. Bianca's initial answer, believe it or not, was "no, thank you." Bianca ultimately decided that she was ready for this next step in her career after receiving encouragement from Neil, her supervisors, and the Board President of one of the buildings where she worked - who highly recommended she step into the open Account Executive position. Bianca was promoted to Account Executive just three years after starting her career in property management at Orsid.

Before Orsid, Bianca worked at Greater New York Insurance, Co. (GNY) where she gained insight into the world of property management before ever stepping foot into that world herself. She worked on the insurance policies for co-ops across New York City, and she may have even worked on policies for some of the buildings in Orsid's portfolio at the time. She gained many transferrable skills while working at GNY that have made her a wonderful property management professional at Orsid.

In early 2020, Orsid's Executive Vice President, Eric McPhee, called Bianca into his office share the news that he was nominating her for REBNY's Rising Star of the Year Award. Bianca was humbled at this news and was honored just to be nominated. Then, the Covid-19 Pandemic hit and there was a sustained pause on this until recently. On October 25th, 2022, during the REBNY Management Breakfast Bianca was finally announced the winner of REBNY's Rising Star of the Year Award. REBNY established this award in 2011. It was created in order to recognize an individual who has not been in the industry for a long time, but who already demonstrates the right qualities to be a great property manager.

When asked about her feelings on being nominated and then winning, Bianca shared that this was a huge honor for her. She truly did not expect to receive the award. Being nominated was humbling enough and to receive this award was even more humbling for her. Bianca has shared that this makes her even more dedicated to her career at Orsid, to her Boards and her residents and she strives to keep growing and excelling so that she may feel (like the rest of her Orsid colleagues already know) that she deserves this recognition.

As a company, we are so proud that one of our own was recognized by REBNY in this way. We look forward to many more years of success for Bianca both at Orsid and beyond!





## Uncommon Solutions: Elevating Building Service Levels

This year, as Orsid welcomed 16 new buildings and assimilated those new buildings to the family, we started to see a reoccurring theme whereby building staff performance levels were not consistent with the expectations of the Boards of Directors.

When a Board desires to improve or raise the level of service in a building, training isn't always the first step in this multi-layered process. In order to provide training designed to improve service levels, it is most important to first understand the constraints that contribute to sub-par service.

While every building is unique, we learned that it wasn't always the staff that was preventing exceptional service from occurring, but rather, conditions existed that the Board was unaware of. The first step is a realistic evaluation of the current situation. This is accomplished by meeting first with the Board to better understand their desires and challenges. The second (and crucial) step is to meet with the Resident Manager and the building staff to understand why the desired level of service isn't being produced.

In many cases, after conducting in-depth interviews with the Board and the employees, roadblocks were identified. Here are a few operational examples to consider that after being addressed, allowed for meaningful training that improved building service levels.

**Having the tools to do the job:** At a UES building where we recently became the Managing Agent, the Board expressed concern that the doormen were always on their personal cell phones while on duty. During a meeting with the employees, so that customized training could be developed specifically for that building, we learned that the communication system that had been used in the past was inoperable due to age, so the staff had resorted to using their personal cell phones in order to communicate with residents. Once the Board learned of this issue, a new

system was specified by the building's architect, purchased and installed. Challenges like this one can be solved easily with relevant customized recommendations. During another meeting, we learned that Doorpersons were expected to hand keys to domestic employees such as dogwalkers and housekeepers but did not have a secure key storage system. We recommended a key-keeping system that is designed to work seamlessly with the BuildingLink system, currently used in most NYC buildings, for a more secure way to manage keys at the front desk.

**Post Pandemic Package Proliferation:** As you will see elsewhere in this article, the amounts of packages that are being delivered today has more than doubled from pre-pandemic levels. The biggest challenge facing Doormen today is the volume of packages that arrive to the lobby each day. Since a decrease isn't expected, it may be time to evaluate the current situation and look for solutions, such as:

**Equipment:** Is your staff equipped with the right tools? Is package processing software (such as BuildingLink) being utilized, and if so, to its fullest capability? Does the doorman have a wireless handheld scanner that will enable him to easily scan a package and notify a resident of its arrival? Is the computer equipment up to date and capable of processing the packages? Have the employees been trained recently on how to use the latest features of the system? In many cases, a simple re-evaluation and additional training can significantly improve service.

**Policies:** Are the building policies still relevant today? Many Doormen tell us that residents receive multiple packages, including packages for family members who don't live in the building because they don't have their own doorman or a secure place to receive deliveries. Many packages are not picked up in a timely manner, resulting in misplaced packages, or overcrowding of small package rooms. If your building's House Rules need a review/refresh, we can help you start that discussion and process.

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## Uncommon Solutions: Elevating Building Service Levels

**Physical Space/Lobby layout:** If your doorman must constantly leave the door to retrieve packages for residents, consider installing a credenza near the doorman station for small packages and overnight letters so that the doorman doesn't need to leave his post so frequently. In one newly assimilated building, a mirror was recommended and installed on a front lobby wall to provide the doorman with a view down the street so that he could better prepare for a resident's arrival. Consider a locked package annex in the basement to hold packages that haven't been picked up in a long time.

**Staffing Levels:** Does your building maintain the right staffing levels for today's demands? With more people working from home, there is more lobby activity such as food, medicine and package deliveries along with

increased communication at the doorman station. If your doorman is always handling packages, he/she may not always be at the door. Many buildings have considered additional staffing and have embraced the "Double Doorman" model at rush hour times to better accommodate resident traffic.

**Discipline:** While never a first option, we can review the pros, cons and costs associated with progressive discipline. Sometimes, this last resort is a necessary measure when reasonable performance expectations are not being met. Boards are encouraged to talk to their Account Executive about when discipline, especially in a union environment, should be effectuated.

These are just a few considerations that are reviewed prior to developing a customized building service training program. If service improvement is a goal in your building, your Account Executive can help to arrange for a customized evaluation leading to a realistic and effective personalized service training program.



## Harassment Training for Building Employees

Orsid New York takes harassment training very seriously. Since 2019, Orsid has implemented not only training courses for its own employees but for building employees and staff. As agent for our portfolio of buildings, we must ensure that staff members are properly trained each year and comply with the harassment training rules implemented by the Federal Government, New York State and New York City.

Preventing discrimination and harassment in the workplace creates a respectful, inclusive culture and a safe and welcoming environment. It builds a positive organizational structure for all employees and residents. Not only must staff members refrain from discrimination and harassment but they must take appropriate action against those who violate these laws. Orsid has teamed up with Traliant Learning Center who have developed a customized and streamlined course that addresses the building service industry and focuses on discrimination and harassment issues not only between co-workers but with residents in a building.

The 50-minute course for building employees explains the expected behaviors for fostering a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. Video scenarios and interactive exercises including “pop up” quizzes introduce employees to key concepts related to workplace harassment, retaliation, discrimination, bystander intervention, bullying, diversity, inclusion and civility. Topics include discrimination (including but not limited to race, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, citizenship disability and genetic information) and sexual harassment (how the law defines it, examples of different types including quid pro quo and hostile work environment, understanding and preventing retaliation, responding to complaints and the consequences associated with such harassment). Employees learn how inappropriate behavior can affect individuals, the co-op/condo and the managing agent and what they can do to intervene, report and prevent misconduct they may experience or witness. The course is designed to satisfy the requirements of the New York State Department of Labor and Division of Human Rights as well as the New York City Commission on Human Rights.

Residential buildings are unique environments and it can be a challenge to ensure a safe, harassment-free workplace. If left unchecked, inappropriate behavior from co-workers, managers, vendors or guests can lead to harassment incidents and costly claims that can affect hiring and retention, morale, loyalty programs, brand reputation and the bottom line.

As part of a holistic approach to preventing workplace harassment, implementing a harassment training program tailored to the industry is an important step in educating staff on how to recognize, report and prevent harassment, and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all employees and guests.

New York State Law requires that all employers conduct harassment prevention training for all employees each year. New York City Law also has training requirements for employers. In addition to annual training, Orsid is required to post a sexual harassment prevention poster in English and in Spanish in an obvious place in the building and give new employees a sexual harassment prevention fact sheet. Orsid’s compliance department ensures that the posters are delivered to each building annually.

Orsid New York has implemented a very strict policy that all building staff members and employees complete the training each year. We maintain a record that all staff members have completed the program and are vigilant to be sure that all receive the necessary training. Our Account Executives are the supervisors of all building staff and are responsible to maintain a discrimination free workplace. Harassment is not to be tolerated, and appropriate disciplinary action is taken whenever appropriate.

Harassment and discrimination in co-ops and condominiums can present somewhat unique circumstances that differ from many other workplaces. This isn’t your typical employer/employee co-worker relationship. While staff members must not harass other co-workers, they must also be trained not to harass building residents or their guests. Technically, the employer of a doorman, handyman and or porter is the co-op corporation or the condominium. While the employer of a doorman, handyman and or porter is the co-op corporation or the condominium, the role of the managing agent of the building is to ensure that the staff are properly trained and in compliance with local, state and federal law.

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## Harassment Training for Building Employees

So, what happens when there is a complaint or allegation of harassment, or discrimination, in a building against a staff member? The managing agent must take the complaint seriously and will need to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of the allegations and learn of the underlying facts to see if it is tantamount to harassment or any other sort of misconduct. Failure to investigate or take immediate and appropriate action could result in liability for both the managing agent and the co-op/condominium.

The managing agent must collect all facts and meet with or interview the victim and/or complainant. As part of the investigation, it is necessary to obtain the facts including dates, times, identity of witnesses and descriptions of the incident. When interviewing witnesses and/or employees it is typical to have the Account Executive and supervisor present, along with the Superintendent who is the direct supervisor of all building service employees. The Account Executive or investigator must ask questions about the incidents and take notes of all responses. If the complaint is founded, the offender may be suspended without pay until a full investigation is completed and a determination of appropriate discipline is made.

During any investigation of an employee, it is important not to discuss the details with other staff members unless they are witnesses to the alleged improper conduct. The staff and board should be instructed, when asked about the employee, that “it is a personal matter and I am not at liberty to discuss.” If the appropriate disciplinary action is termination of employment, all personnel are directed to merely state that the employee is no longer working in the building.

Employees who believe that they have been subjected to improper discrimination or harassment can file claims with either the New York City Commission on Human Rights, the New York State Division of Human Rights or even the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The penalties for the failure to implement proper employment practices and for

allowing discrimination or harassment in the workplace to go unchecked can easily reach six figures for even relatively minor violations and most findings are excluded from insurance coverage. The failure to properly address such claims can also lead to even more staff problems from lowered morale, employee loyalty, and claims of a hostile work environment.

In conclusion, no matter what the outcome is, all harassment claims must be taken seriously, properly investigated and appropriate steps must be taken by the employer to ensure to prevent harassment or discrimination.





## Climate Mobilization Act

In October, the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) circulated proposed rules for reporting on and complying with annual greenhouse gas emissions for buildings under Local Law 97 of 2019, also known as the Climate Mobilization Act (CMA). The rules establish emissions limits and emission factors for different property types for the periods of 2024-2029, 2030-2034, 2035-2039, 2040-2049 and for 2050 and beyond. The rules also set forth greenhouse gas coefficients for various energy resources including on site and grid purchased electricity.

The rules were recently finalized and will be effective January 19, 2023. Future rules will also be published to cover Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) and penalty mitigation for “good faith efforts” to reduce carbon emissions. As noted in previous editions of this column, the CMA sets forth penalties of \$268 per ton of carbon emissions above the applicable caps.

While there are lawsuits challenging the law, it is unlikely that the law will be significantly changed before the initial 2024 compliance period. All Boards should be cognizant of forecasted penalties for their individual properties and steps that can be taken to reduce carbon emissions over the next few years.

## Fair Chance Housing, City Council Int 632 – 2022

This controversial bill, if passed, would prohibit housing discrimination in rentals, sales, leases, subleases, or occupancy agreements in New York City, on the basis of arrest record or criminal history. Landlords (including Cooperative and Condominium Boards) would be prohibited from obtaining criminal record information as part of any application. A public hearing was held on December 7, 2022, and it is unclear whether it will be enacted in its current form at the time this writing.

## Short-term Rental Restrictions, Local Law 18

The purpose of Local Law 18 is to curtail illegal short-term rentals in buildings where they are prohibited and to require the registration of both the service and the host for any legal short-term rentals. The law would establish and maintain a prohibited building list for those buildings that have rules against short term rentals. The list will ensure Cooperatives and Condominiums do not have to struggle against short-

term tenants who, in some instances, have negatively impacted the quality of life in buildings negatively due to unwanted traffic, noise, and building security concerns. A public hearing was held on December 5, 2022 which was extended for public comment until 8PM on January 11, 2023. To submit any comments you may have on the rules, you can submit them at [this link](#). The Law will go into effect on January 9, 2023, and penalties can be assessed starting May 9, 2023.

## New Garbage and Recycling Collection Rules

The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has circulated new rules to be implemented this coming spring on the collection of garbage and recycling. The rules are aimed at curtailing the rat population in the city. For those using receptacles with tight-fitting lids, such receptacles containing solid waste and recyclables may be placed at the curb for collection by DSNY no earlier than 6:00 p.m. on the day before their scheduled collection. Those using bags may place out their materials at the curb for collection by DSNY no earlier than 8:00 p.m. on the day before their scheduled collection. In both cases, solid waste and recyclables must be set out before midnight to allow for Department collection beginning at 12:01 a.m. on the scheduled collection day. There will also be a new opt in program to put out refuse and recycling between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. on the day of collection rather than after 6:00 p.m. (if in a container with a lid) or 8:00 p.m. the night before collection. This will provide flexibility to building staff in terms of changes to scheduled shifts necessary to implement this rule change.

## Lithium-ion Batteries

In response to the increasing number of fires related to Lithium-ion batteries the City Council is considering several measures. One bill would prohibit the sale of batteries for mobility devices such as electric bicycles or scooters unless such batteries have been listed and labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory or other approved organization such as “United Laboratories” (UL). Another would require the FDNY to develop an informational campaign to educate the public on the risks posed by powered mobility devices and safety measures that mitigate such risks. Int. 752 of 2022 would go further and prohibit the sale of second-use lithium-ion batteries that have been assembled or reconditioned using cells removed from used batteries.

## Orsid Anniversaries

We would like to take a moment to congratulate the following Orsid employees for reaching incredible career milestones with the company. We would not be where we are today without your contributions!



### Frank Pompea, Vice President

We asked Frank what was special to him about Orsid and he said:

*“Aside from the friendly atmosphere which makes it very pleasant to work at Orsid, I feel a special gratitude to our support staff such as accounting, compliance, transfer agents, alteration administrators and our administrative assistants who bring strong professionalism and a willingness to assist to their job. It makes my job easier and makes me a better manager as a result of their efforts.”*



Dennis DePaola, EVP & Director of Compliance (24 years)

Laura Krasner, Executive Vice President (24 years)

Maya Kurayeva, Accounting (24 years)

Hugh Zanger, Rental Portfolio Director (23 years)

Edward Zamora, Office Manager (23 years)

Anita Sehwni, Closing & Transfer Manager (23 years)

Despina Leandrou, Vice President (22 years)

Andre Kaplan, Chief Financial Officer (21 years)



Grazyna Cyprys, Administrative Assistant (19 years)

Joe Dodaj, VP & Chief Controller (19 years)

Don Skupinsky, Senior Vice President (18 years)

Majlinda Brahimaj, Accounting (18 years)

Eric McPhee, EVP & Director of Risk Management (17 years)

Donika Dodaj, Director, Closing & Transfer (17 years)

Dennis Nagel, Account Executive (17 years)

Eileen Aluska, Vice President (16 years)

Aleke Radoncic, Vice President (16 years)

Marte Shabaku, Accounting (16 years)

Marie Caka, Accounting (15 years)



Robert Mellman, Senior Portfolio Director (14 years)

Andrea Doyle, Alterations Coordinator (13 years)

Pasquale Bettino, Account Executive (12 years)

Mary Mariano, Senior Account Executive (12 years)

Jasmina Martinovic, Office Manager (11 years)

Naro Dzdizovic, Senior Account Executive (11 years)

John Devall, Vice President (11 years)

Ben Hawkins, Vice President/Controller (11 years)

Fatime Lleshaj, Accounting (11 years)

Justine Delagana-Tagliani, Vice President (10 years)

Al Dizdari, Account Executive (10 years)

Denisa Music, Alterations Manager (10 years)

Robbie Janowitz, Senior Vice President (10 years)





## Welcome to Orsid

We have welcomed the following buildings to the Orsid family:

### 22 Riverside Drive Condominium

22 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10023

### 65-75 Roebling Owner LLC

65-75 Roebling Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11211

### 77-83 Roebling Owner LLC

77-83 Roebling Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11211

In Q4 2022, we have welcomed the following new associates to the Orsid family:

Olivia Sheppard, *Administrative Assistant*

### Thank you to the writers of The Orsid Digest

Chelsea Shapiro  
Robbie Janowitz  
Dennis DePaola  
Martha Stout

Eric Gonchar  
Cosmin Ardeljan  
Stefany Velez  
Susan Fitzpatrick

We hope you found this newsletter informative. If you have any questions or a story to share for a future edition, please email [info@orsidny.com](mailto:info@orsidny.com)



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