

# Executive Summary

## A Strategic Redesign for APPA

by E. Lander Medlin

As part of an ongoing effort to ensure that APPA's strategic direction, programs, and services are effectively targeted and actions are taken to address the members' stated needs, APPA conducted both quantitative and qualitative research surveys of our members last October. Our study goals were to assess perceptions of institutional members regarding APPA and its value to both chief facilities officers and mid-level managers. In addition, we wanted to gauge the perceptions and value of our key educational offerings.

We received a total response rate of 24.3 percent to the surveys and statistically significant responses from both members and nonmembers. There was a distribution of survey responses from chief facilities officer titles totaling 49 percent, and from mid-level managers totaling 44 percent. These numbers far surpassed our expectations.

Equally important, the wealth of information and critical data we received has proven invaluable for our discussions around how to position the association in the future. We greatly appreciate your willingness to engage in this important survey research. The insights we gleaned from the survey data were used in a subsequent strategic planning session by the executive committee and staff to validate the existing strategic plan and to identify tactical changes necessary to keep APPA as the "Association of Choice" for educational facilities professionals.

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The survey research firm (Stratton Research) who conducted the surveys prepared an analysis of this data and information and provided a report with their findings and recommendations. In general, they found that APPA's strengths are:

- Education that is leading edge
- Publications that keep members informed and up-to-date
- Networking with a rich peer group of other educational facilities professionals
- Highly "professional" organization

However, given the competitive marketplace of today, they found that APPA could improve in four general areas:

- Provide a clear focus of what we are (as it was considered essential we serve both constituency groups of chief facilities officers and mid-level managers)
- Recruitment and retention (at the grassroots level and to ensure engagement of young facilities professionals)
- Marketing and public relations (to clarify the value proposition)
- Communications and outreach (to ensure brand recognition and identity)

They also identified several high priority opportunities for us to focus our efforts. They were:

- Targeted educational programs
- Increasing importance of facilities
- Certification/credentialing
- Hooks to get people involved and keep them involved
- Use of expertise in state and federal regulations
- Synergy with the regions

Given the comprehensive feedback from our members and an extensive review of several other documents (e.g., our 2005 Magazine Readership Survey and the 2004 Member Opinion Survey), we engaged in a two-day facilitated session to review and clarify APPA's strategic plan and organizational direction and focus. The purpose of this session was to validate the existing strategic plan and to identify tactical changes necessary to keep APPA as the "Association of Choice" for educational facilities professionals. As a result, the group determined that the framework of the present strategic plan remains viable. In particular, our desired outcomes should ensure:

- APPA is the "go to" resource for all educational facilities questions
- The APPA "brand" is clear and well known
- Competence of educational facilities professionals
- Credibility with senior institutional officers
- APPA nurtures and mentors young professionals

However, in order to achieve these important outcomes, it is exceedingly clear that we need to focus our volunteer and staff efforts on several strategies during the next three to five years if we are to remain the association of choice for educational facilities professionals. Therefore, we believe

the following seven strategies will enhance and support our ability to achieve these desired outcomes over the next several years. They are:

- Develop and execute a “branding” program
- Develop and implement a cutting edge web site to provide the “go to” resource and brand clarity
- Expand research to build credibility and visibility
- Engage in symbiotic and collaborative partnerships
- Engage young professionals in the organization
- Provide targeted cutting edge educational programs and “fix” the Forum
- Establish credible and valued credentialing programs for individuals and institutions

APPA’s Board of Directors has provided its full support of these seven strategies. In addition, our most recent budget has been developed in

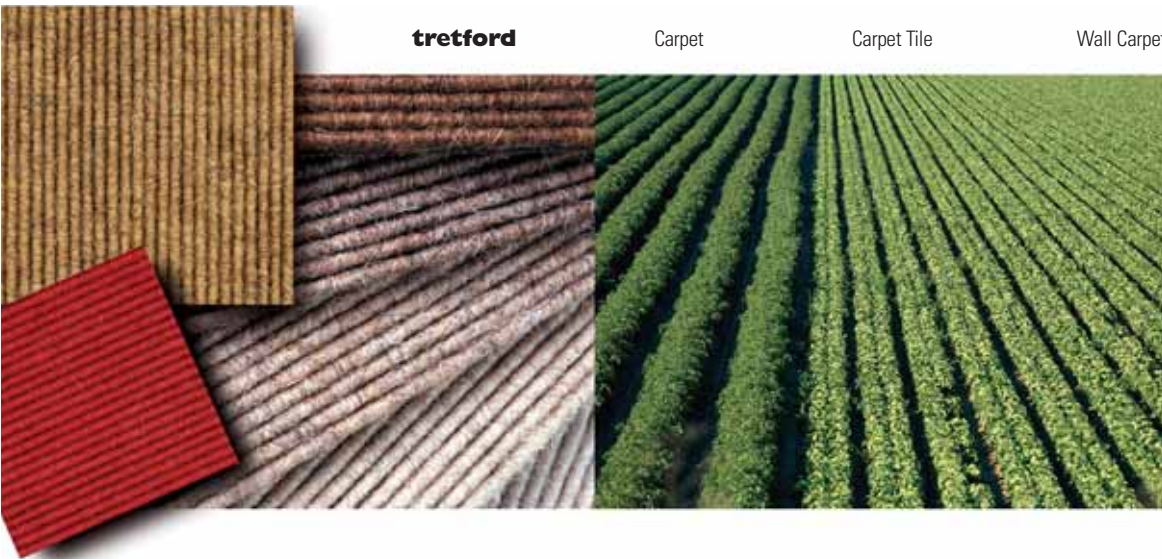
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alignment with these strategies and incorporates the funding necessary to ensure we maintain our momentum toward their achievement over the next three to five years.

As the education environment is rapidly and dramatically changing, so too is the association world. Therefore, we must shift our focus to that of the future, to a model of effectiveness over efficiency, and to a brand identity and clarity that doesn’t leave us being the “best kept secret” in facilities management. As time goes on, we will

keep you apprised of the changes occurring around each one of these important strategies.

We hope you are as excited about these focused strategies and targeted outcomes as we are. And, frankly, none of this could have happened as effectively if we had not received your wholehearted support and engagement at this critical juncture. Again, we appreciate your willingness to respond to the research surveys and to offer your candid feedback and advice. Please don’t hesitate to do so at any time in the future. 🏛️



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