

# Executive Summary

## APPA's Revitalization

by E. Lander Medlin

Since 1914, APPA's mission has been to share industry information among educational facilities professionals by building a network that supports educational excellence with quality leadership and professional management. To achieve this, we offer an array of educational and professional development programs, research opportunities, publications, and recognition of institutional excellence and individual achievement—all tailored to meet the needs and expectations of educational institutions.

This foundation remains the bedrock upon which we rely. Indeed, the knowledge and experience of our members—nearly 5,000 educational facilities professionals worldwide—provides an unparalleled network of facilities management knowledge. The typical facilities professional comes from a wide range of career tracks and related professions. The diverse background of the APPA membership is a strength that has benefited the organization and has insured a continuous flow of new ideas and expertise.

However, our world is changing dramatically, at a phenomenally rapid pace. There are external changes occurring that will be important factors for our association and the profession to address, such as:

- People of more diverse backgrounds are coming into the profession, not just engineers and architects.
- Facilities professionals are more mobile, expecting to make several job moves to accelerate promotion during their careers. Resume-building material is a high priority.

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- There is a labor shortage of qualified facilities professionals. More people will need to be prepared for leadership roles with more opportunities for advancement.
- More than 30 percent of APPA's senior, institutional members—and industry leaders—will retire within the next five to seven years.
- The Generation X (Gen X) professionals prefer short-term engagement with their association in the form of projects, tasks,

mid-level facilities managers at institutions of varying size and scope.

- The competition for members' time, attention, and available professional development resources.
- The need for increased focus in a highly competitive market.

As we consider these factors, the challenge presented is this: Will we be able to connect with the next generation of facilities professionals and



transportable skills, and resume material.

- The Gen X and following Millennial generations of professionals will join associations that specifically deliver professional services they need to advance in their career.
- An “on-demand” mentality exists that will affect the content and delivery of APPA's educational products and informational material.

There are also several internal factors to consider, such as:

- The revitalization of APPA's value proposition.
- The challenge to appeal to a diverse market of both senior and

continue to be the association of choice in our field? Can we change fast enough to do so?

Throughout our 93-year history, APPA has shown its willingness to adapt, reshape, and transform itself to anticipate the changing landscape of educational institutions and the corresponding impact on the educational facilities profession. This ability has been especially significant as the world has moved from an industrial to information age.

As the education environment is rapidly and dramatically changing, so too is the association world. Therefore, we must shift our focus to the future—a model of effectiveness over

efficiency, a solid brand identity, and clarity of communication that solidifies our position as the association of choice in educational facilities management. APPA's approach to these challenges and opportunities will be critical.

To ensure APPA's strategic direction, programs, and services are effectively targeted to address these challenges and our members changing needs, APPA conducted quantitative and qualitative research surveys of our members from 2004 to 2006. Our goals were to assess the perceptions of institutional members regarding APPA and its value to senior facilities officers and mid-level managers. We also wanted to gauge the perceptions and value of our key educational offerings. Our extensive survey research findings indicated several high-priority areas to focus on:

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

Implementation and execution of our 7 Key Strategies (see sidebar) over the next three to five years will be critical to APPA's future as the association of choice for educational facilities professionals. If effectively executed, APPA will be the voice on strategic institutional issues for the profession.

To be effective in our mission, we must face our competitive challenges head on and focus our efforts accordingly. In fact, most of our competition exists right inside our own organization and institutions. Organizationally we must ensure synergy with our regions and state and local chapters. APPA needs to use the tremendous delivery system of the regions and state and local chapters more effectively. APPA also needs to continue to focus its resources on research and

content-rich production and development. Finally, APPA must increase the awareness of the facilities profession with senior institutional officers. Indeed, this will keep us focused on fostering the strategic collaborative relationships and partnerships that are so necessary to the educational

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facilities professionals' visibility and credibility.

Institutionally, we need to ensure resources are focused on both the senior and mid-level career professional. The delivery of programming must respect the time and resource availability of our members.

Ultimately, APPA's overriding, overarching purpose is to transform its members into more highly effective facilities professionals and leaders utilizing as its foundation of solid research, information and knowledge, and emphasizing the importance of standards and best practices for the industry. The result is a revitalized image and delivery system. This revitalization will position APPA as an organization that elevates facilities professionals into influential leaders in education. And, of critical importance, this work must translate into and create a consistent, fully aligned member experience.

Although our work has only begun, our focus is clear, our direction is set, and our engagement is critical. The time is now. 🏗️

# 7 APPA'S Key Strategies

**will enhance and support our revitalization efforts.**

1. Develop and execute a "brand" initiative.
2. Develop and implement an enhanced website to become the "go to" resource for facilities questions.
3. Expand research to build credibility and visibility by senior institutional officers.
4. Engage in symbiotic and collaborative partnerships.
5. Engage young facilities professionals.
6. Provide targeted cutting-edge educational programs.
7. Establish credible and valued credentialing programs for individuals and institutions.