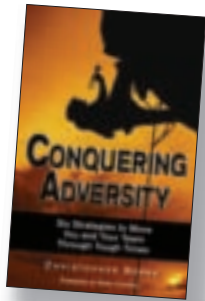


The Bookshelf

Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., AIA

Leadership in facilities is a subset of APPA's core competencies. While APPA's body of knowledge, the four-volume Facilities Management Manual, provides some excellent examples, I can't seem to find enough to satisfy me. This month we look at two books on leadership that should prove useful to all APPA members.



Conquering Adversity: Six Strategies to Move You and Your Team Through Tough Times, by Christopher Novak, CoverStone Leadership Institute, Dallas, TX, 2004, 92 pages, softcover, \$14.95, audio CD, \$19.95.

Sometimes bad things happen. Sometimes bad things even happen at work: unfair criticism, misplaced blame, loss of funding, missed opportunities, etc. In the face of adversity, it can be too easy to lose focus, confidence, and/or momentum. In *Conquering Adversity*, Christopher Novak provides advice for working through the tough times and helping others do the same.

Ted Weidner is assistant vice chancellor of facilities management & planning at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and president of Facility Asset Consulting. E-mail him at tweidner2@unlnotes.unl.edu.



While presented against the context of the author's own devastating personal loss, the strategies and insights are equally applicable to teams or individuals dealing with personal crisis or professional disappointments.

Some of his strategies speak to the importance of maintaining perspective. For example, he recommends you take a fact-based accounting of the situation. What are your priorities? What exactly has been lost? What do you still have? As a team leader, you can ask these questions and bring into focus both the resources and reasons for continuing to move forward.

You can also create realistic expectations of a return to better times. By communicating a sincere belief in the resiliency of the group and the situation, without minimizing or dismissing the loss or disappointment felt by others, you can create an envi-

ronment where workplace mistakes become learning experiences, let-downs become lessons learned, and crisis situations become challenges to overcome.

Other strategies speak to the power of personal relationships in the workplace and how they can create a "chemistry" that results in exceptional team performance during good times and much needed trust, communication, and willingness to help others during bad. Key to these relationships is communicating and sharing on a personal level: sharing your passion for a job well done, your ideas and thoughts, your appreciation and admiration.

Additional strategies build on the belief that while imperfect action is nearly always preferable to no action, this is especially true in times of adversity. As team leaders, we can help others overcome the natural reactions of indecision and hesitation by encouraging and rewarding action, even when we may not be sure what our next best steps should be.

While presented against the context of the author's own devastating personal loss, the strategies and insights are equally applicable to teams or individuals dealing with personal crisis or professional disappointments. Knowing what to do in the face of adversity is difficult. Knowing what to say to others who are looking to you for leadership can be even more difficult. Whether you refer to it while navigating your own tough times, while searching for the right words to encourage a coworker, or as a road map to share with others following a period of organizational crisis, *Conquering Adversity* can be a helpful addition to your resource library.



Leadership in Educational Facilities

Administration, Christopher K. Ahoy, APPA: Alexandria, VA, 2007, 234 pages, softcover, \$45 (APPA members), \$60 (nonmembers).

The distinguishing

characteristic between a manager and a leader is vision. Chris Ahoy, past president of APPA, presents true leadership vision in *Leadership in Educational Facilities Administration* by

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documenting how he started a new job with a vision and plan. This dense book, one that can be read quickly but really requires a lot of time to digest, provides the nearly complete story of Iowa State University's Facilities Planning & Management journey to a world-class operation. It is "nearly complete" because the 12-year plan was started in 1997 and won't be com-

plete for another year, according to the author.

While some authors of leadership books present the work of others or snapshots of their accomplishments, I don't recall reading a single book where the author presented the entire process within one organization. It's all in here—the process, the organization, the steps, stories, and examples. It is interesting to read about the changes and the methodical focus used to make the changes. I can say from a single visit I've had that there are some impressive systems in place to support the changes. The book doesn't detail every system and may not detail every change; it's not that long a book.

Ahoy presents his vision for the changes and how they developed over a career at four other institutions. This is not a "flash of brilliance plan" but one that was thought out through years of experience, study, and careful (if sometimes difficult) execution. The plan presented may not work for everyone. The plan is described well, the sources and metrics are identified, and one could transplant the plan by following the book.

The book is broken into five chapters. Each chapter begins with one or more quotes on leadership or vision. Topics with chapters are broken out with sub-topics clearly organized. Occasional diagrams and figures highlight important points so the reader can follow along. Additionally, Web references are sprinkled, sparingly, to provide additional supporting information or examples. More than 100 cited references, a detailed index, and glossary of terms make this book an excellent reference.

I don't think I will ever read every book on leadership, even all the books available from APPA's bookstore, but I do believe there are some must-read books for facility managers and I believe this is one of them. We are fortunate that Chris found the time to document his improvement efforts. ¶

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4060 Peachtree Road, N.E.
Suite D201
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(888) 887-9995
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