

Planning a Course for Success

— By David Gray



There are some things we know all too well: things are not the same as they once were; change is here to stay; and facilities professionals are in a position to make a difference in the future of our institutions. With this in mind, some of us are now scrutinizing the request and opportunities for professional development.

Continual technical improvements have always been a mark of a strong workforce. The ability to compete strategically for resources justifies projects and training, as well as indicate an able workforce. Both require a set of learned and developed skills. As the landscape for our training needs has changed, APPA has remained committed to providing a new perspective, and defining a roadmap for success by providing the principles and skills required to be an effective leader.

At each level of a facility professional's career, APPA has a proven track record of supporting the necessary development opportunities. The beginning of the Professional Development Continuum guides us into the Supervisor Toolkit and the Institute for Facilities Management. Over time, APPA has taken several strong steps in its leadership-centered offerings. Leadership Academy, the Thought Leaders Series, and the SFO are examples of offerings that provide the facilities professional leadership skills and opportunities to network with others, allowing for preparation to face the challenges ahead.

As we head into the next few years – where garnering resources may in fact continue to be a challenge – APPA will continue to partner with its regions, and state and local chapters, as well as its strategic alliance partners and others in the industry, to provide offerings that have been developed to:

- Promote critical thinking and problem solving;
- Provide facilities professionals with proven techniques to engage staffers;
- Explore strategies and tools to help better educate us on global issues and sustainability;
- And much more

APPA will continue to seek out the best thinkers and practices from all business areas and industries, refine the best ideas, and incorporate them into their program offerings. APPA is also committed to employing technologies (such as webcasts/webinars, etc.) that could prove to be attractive to younger professionals, be cost-effective for all and support APPA's position as the association of choice for facilities professionals.

On July 8, 2009, the APPA 2009 annual meeting will open. We will be anticipating the rewards of a strong program that has been developed by a dedicated group of our colleagues. Slated are experts in the areas of leadership and communication, accountability and disciplines, sustainability, and the concept of total cost of ownership. We will have the opportunity to hear from world-renowned speakers such as Stephen Covey, Michael Abrashoff, and Chip and Dan Heath, who will each share with us the essence of leadership, how to continually be self renewed and how to draw strength from your staff – especially important at this critical time.

Over the days of the event, opportunities for networking will be plentiful as we gather with our colleagues from around the world to represent various types of institutions as well as functions within our campus communities. The benefits of your attendance to APPA 2009 are endless.

Our time is at hand to make a difference in the success of our institutions. We look forward to supporting you and your staff at every level. ☪

David Gray is assistant vice president, facilities services at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN, and APPA's Vice President for Professional Development. E-mail him at dgray@mtsu.edu.