



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

**Change is inevitable; however** implementing a change may not be easy or quick. Both of the books reviewed this month identify reasons and ways to implement change to improve your organization. Given the difficult times we're all going through, these books should be helpful in surviving and thriving in the future.

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### SWITCH, HOW TO CHANGE THINGS WHEN CHANGE IS HARD

By Chip and Dan Heath, Random House, New York, 2010, 320 pages, hardcover, \$26, Kindle, \$11.70.

The closing speakers at APPA 2009, Chip and Dan Heath of *Made to Stick* have written another book; some attendees may have received an advance copy already. These exciting

and compelling speakers have assembled examples of successful changes in *Switch*.

The Heath brothers have broken the requirements for accomplishing the switch by focusing on three areas: the *rider*, the *elephant*, and the *path*. The rider (of the elephant) may see what change is needed but if the elephant doesn't want to go that way there will be resistance to change. Similarly, if the current path for the elephant and rider is rough, a different path may make change easier. *Switch* is broken into three major parts for these three areas and each has three chapters that describe ways to implement change.

We're all facing difficult situations now. Budget cuts, sustainability concerns, and increasing demands on service force us to identify changes to improve our situation. While it's easy to identify the need to change, getting an organization to change is not. Chip and Dan Heath

discuss the impediments but spend a great deal of time identifying solutions to change resistance with examples to provide clarity and support. There's even a higher education example!

Speaking from experience, *Switch* explains some of the social or psychological reasons why the methods used worked (or didn't work) to bring change to the organization. There are no positive examples of brute force changes; what works are creative communication devices, elimination of systemic problems, and focusing in on what works versus what doesn't.

All in, I found this to be an enjoyable book, easy to read and informative. I've got a lot of marks in my copy so I'll be referring to it in the future.

### LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES ADMINISTRATION

By Christopher K. Ahoy, APPA, Alexandria, VA, 2007, 234 pages, softcover, \$45, APPA Member; \$75, non-member.

Budget outlook is the number one topic being discussed these days. Certainly there are other issues — bench-marking, sustainability, and so on — but the issue of delivering more with less seems to be never-ending. But what does that have to do with facilities? Plenty!

*Leadership in Educational Facilities* opens with considerable discussion about the importance of developing employees to step up to leadership roles as the Baby Boomers, now the 'grey beards' of the organization near retirement. This isn't the only industry where the younger generation needs to step up to take the reins. While I expect every previous generation has said similar things as they near retirement the challenge may be more real because of the lack of technically focused students moving through our colleges and universities. My bias toward technically educated facility managers is real and based on personal observations of the challenges they face

every day. However, I'm not so jaded that soft skills, business acumen, communication, personnel management, etc. are real and necessary. Development of these skills within the organization through effective and creative leadership are essential. Ahoy agrees with this concern.

While technical skills are needed for good facilities management, Ahoy also recognizes the importance of making sound business decisions and identifying ways to make the organization lean and effective. Large or small, an organization that has not studied its processes and risks is likely to remain 'siloes' where each person or small group handles a limited task somewhat oblivious to the needs of others in the organization. The ability to break down the organization and rebuild it following a structured process is essential to survival in our fiscal environment.

Quality does not automatically mean more spending, it could mean preservation of services with less budget or improved services with a constant budget. Quality is determined by the customer and upper management. Leadership gets the organization to deliver a quality product with limited resources; anyone can improve quality with more resources.

This is a dense book; it is packed with information about developing a better facilities management organization through lean and quality initiatives. There are references to websites and an extensive bibliography. While the book has been available for several years it deserves a look now because the times demand so much from facility officers. §

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