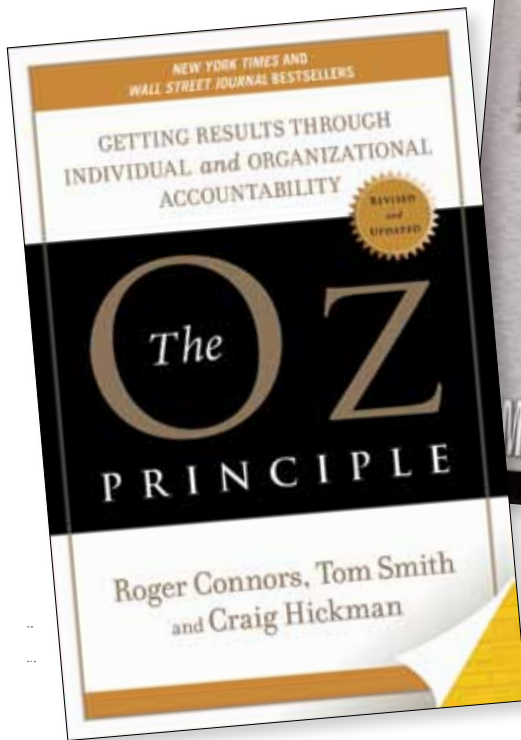




Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., CEFP, AIA

The New Year is a great time

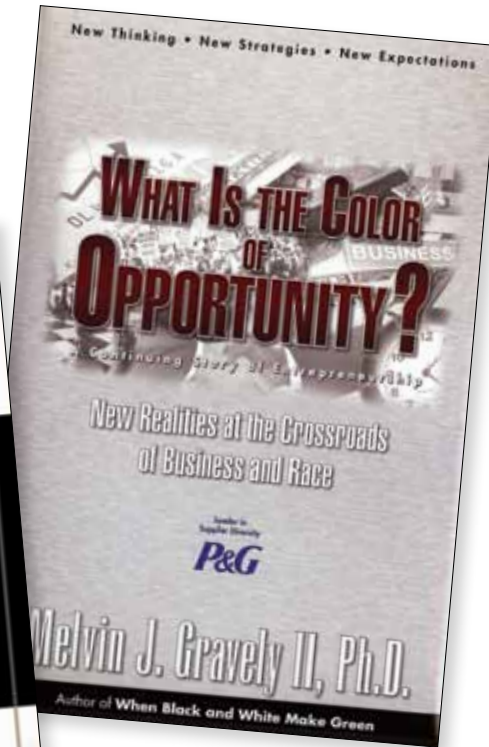
to reexamine previously held assumptions and revisit approaches to address problems. The two books reviewed provide some examples and guidelines that will help you meet your New Year goals.



THE OZ PRINCIPLE: GETTING RESULTS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Roger Connors, Tom Smith, and Craig Hickman, Portfolio, New York, NY, 2004, 222 pages, hardcover \$26.95.

There never seem to be enough analogies between literature and management techniques. It's almost a chicken and egg issue: which came first—the allegorical representation of good and bad characteristics in people—or the people and their good and bad characteristics. The authors Connors, Smith, and Hickman have identified corrections to management issues



demonstrated in the The Wizard of Oz with *The Oz Principle*.

While it may be obvious, *The Oz Principle* identifies in the four primary characters (Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion, and Dorothy) the characteristics of people who shun accountability, instead looking for others to be responsible for correcting the situation they find themselves in. No brains? The wizard will fix it. No heart? The wizard has one. No nerve? The wizard will make you brave. Not sure how to get home? The wizard will show you the way. The same thing applies to those who shun responsibility for their situation at work.

While the various techniques about building accountability were instructive, I found parallels to APPA's Leadership Academy much more interesting. Individual and team/organizational accountability are described as different

“levels” match the stages in the Leadership Academy that are part of APPA U. While the Academy focuses on interpersonal and managerial issues that are not clearly spelled out in *The Oz Principles*, those elements are demonstrated through the individual and organizational accountability examples presented.

If you're an Academy graduate, or planning to attend the Academy, *The Oz Principle* provides either a primer, or a refresher, of important personal and managerial concepts that will make you or your organization better.

I've already thought of ways to utilize them in my work; I expect you will too.

WHAT IS THE COLOR OF OPPORTUNITY? A CONTINUING STORY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Melvin J. Gravely II, Impact Group Publishers, Cincinnati, OH, 2011, 118 pages, \$19.95 hardcover.

Several weeks ago, I was invited to an event designed to foster minority participation in community business. The university was the “big dog” in the room and had helped sponsor the event for eight years. I had the opportunity to meet many talented minority business owners interested in selling their services or wares. And, it was a great way to meet potential contractors and consultants.

Featured at the event was Dr. Melvin J. Gravely II; a copy of his most recent book was provided to the attendees. While I often look at these opportunities with some suspicion, I enjoyed hearing Dr. Gravely's insights in the current state of minority businesses and the business climate in general. His observations, translated to more global perceptions, are outlined in *What is the Color of Opportunity?* Those observations are not terribly different from a book I reviewed over 15 years ago titled

Who Moved My Cheese? The context may have changed, but the message is the same: the climate of business has changed and we need to change with it to survive.

While I'm not saying anything new to readers of this column or this magazine, the ever-changing world in which we live provides us with challenges that


force us to observe, assess, and adapt. If we don't, the world will change around us and we won't be prepared to continue surviving.

In *Color of Opportunity* the message is delivered through a story of frustration, discovery, and reinvention. While the characters are often minority businessmen, there's a more universal reality

to the message. We can't continue to assume success will be defined in the same form forever, and we can't expect to succeed for very long if we maintain a short-term perspective.

The long-term environment of "minority" businesses is that they are gradually becoming the majority. As a result, the traditional set-asides are becoming more dilute and companies are able to meet any minority goals simply by finding the best price. So, firms that want to continue to prosper and thrive under this minority-majority environment must do what other entrepreneurs have done for years—build on strengths, eliminate weaknesses, and leverage the expectations of their clients.

While your organization may not be affected by minority participation on campus projects or purchases, seeing the world from their perspective generates a new reality. These talented members of our local contracting communities are looking at ways to ensure their business viability. At the same time, we have both social and financial obligations to our institutions, and there are many qualified vendors to choose from. These vendors (including us) must recognize the new reality and focus on other drivers for company growth and success.

Color of Opportunity is a "slap in the face" for those firms reliant on set-asides. While the message is delivered gently, it is also a wake-up call to those of us who have gotten too comfortable "with the way things have always been done." The author is a perceptive and articulate speaker who can help you identify the new order of things, and position you for success. 

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