



# APPA BOK: General Administration and Management

By Jack Hug, APPA Fellow

*“If you don’t understand people, you don’t understand the Facilities Management profession.”*

Imagine that you are faced with intense budget pressures and have been asked to focus on the facilities management department cost structure, which is predominately related to people costs. You consider the alternatives—layoffs, furloughs, cutbacks in travel, reduction in training and development, hiring freezes, pay cuts, reduced overtime, changes in work shifts, and so on. At the same time you think about the challenges—loss of employee morale, loss of talent, and quite possibly a snowballing effect resulting in poor service productivity and performance.

With little to guide the decision-making process, you are unsure what to do and risk making a short-term decision that will have lasting negative impact on the organizations capabilities to perform. Is there a way to reduce costs and maintain organizational performance? So far, credible solutions to such challenges are hard to come by. Your plan must consider that change is inevitable, communication skills will be crucial, and you leadership talent will be put to the highest test yet.

## **APPA BOK (BODY OF KNOWLEDGE): LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

This section of the BOK contains chapters that are timeless and most relevant for the changing requirements faced by the facilities professional.

*Change Management, Communication, and Leadership*, all have one thing in common: people! The authors for these chapters make the case for our need to understand the human capital that we have been charged to steward and independently recognize the critical importance of the role of people in building organizational capacity and capabilities. Let me connect the dots for you.

# BOK

## Body of Knowledge

[WWW.APPA.ORG/BOK](http://WWW.APPA.ORG/BOK)

In introducing the chapter *Change Management*, author John Morris writes that “failing to change with the times and new demands will doom the facilities department to mediocrity. To achieve the world-class service that many of us strive for, we must be willing to embrace change and prepare our organizations to do the same. The true challenge of organizational change lies not in the mechanics of making change, but in addressing the cultural norms that define the current organization. It is important to estimate what impact a change likely will have

on employee behavior patterns, work processes, technological requirements, and motivation. Change will affect the individuals within the organization.”

In the chapter *Communication*, Bob Hascall and Karen M. Salisbury establish communication as not just a core leadership skill, but also “an essential ingredient for leadership success...Effective communication includes speaking, writing, listening, and ensuring congruency between your words and actions.” Bob and Karen reminds us that “we speak multiple times each day, so it’s crucial that our message, information, thoughts, and ideas are transmitted in a way that is understood by all listeners and that information is communicated in a caring and honest way. It is important to communicate with listeners in a way that achieves the desired outcome that is, to acknowledge, convince, motivate, or persuade the listeners.”

With the reference in this chapter to the book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, the authors outline seven tools that can lead to profitable conversations. These tools serve as a good reminder on the importance of careful practice of communication.

In the chapter *Leadership*, author Bill Daigneau has taken an insightful approach and has chosen from among all the broad topics typically included in discussions of leadership, to provide a

primary focus on the practical aspects of leadership: its characteristics, its traits, and its activities. "The three fundamental areas in which leadership is important are 1) setting direction, 2) building the management team, and 3) team leadership."

Bill describes the context of the higher education enterprise. In this setting, the meaning of leadership is explained along with six essential elements of mission, vision, values, communication, empowerment, and self-understanding. A series of questions were presented that can be used to define the level of practice of leadership within each of the six essential elements. The answers to these questions can help facility managers determine the areas in which they are presently providing the necessary leadership and those in which they might further develop their leadership in the future.

**...THE PROBLEMS FACING FACILITIES MANAGERS ARE VERY REAL AND COMPLEX...**

Bill reminds us that "Doing the right things in most any field of human endeavor, including facilities management is not easy. If it was easy, everyone would be doing it, and we would not need to talk about the problems facing higher education. However, the problems facing facilities managers are very real and complex, and will require some fundamental changes in how they approach and manage their job. This is what David Noer, in his book, *Healing the Wounds*, calls *culture busting*. It is the process of abandoning old paradigms and creating new ones. It requires that managers abandon their existing beliefs and venture into new and uncharted solutions. This process is extremely unsettling and would be impossible if it were not for a single great attribute of humankind: leadership!"

Notice the common thread here is people; the connection of Leadership

to Managing Change, and Communication. These authors are all proven successful practitioners with an undeniable track record of understanding people and each is well known for being *APPA-Active* and for their substantial contributors to our profession.

Do yourself a favor and read these chapters of the BOK. ☎

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