

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

**W**hat a year—thank goodness 2016 is over. In order to help you leave 2016 behind, I offer two books that focus on ways to improve, one quantitative and the other more qualitative. Have a great new year!

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR DUMMIES

Bernard Marr, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, West Sussex, UK, 2015, 280 pp., softcover, \$24.99.

There is a popular quote about measurement, attributed to Peter Drucker: “What gets measured gets improved.” But there’s also a concern about measuring too much. I’ve discussed the issue with knowledgeable colleagues who have seen organizations with as many as 30,000 “key performance indicators”—really, 30,000! Most people are limited to remembering seven numbers in a row; we’ve been forced to move beyond that limit with phone numbers and other identification numbers. Thank goodness for smartphone features.

I’m not sure how many key indicators others can remember or use, but I’d be hard pressed to get much beyond seven myself; I prefer between three and five.

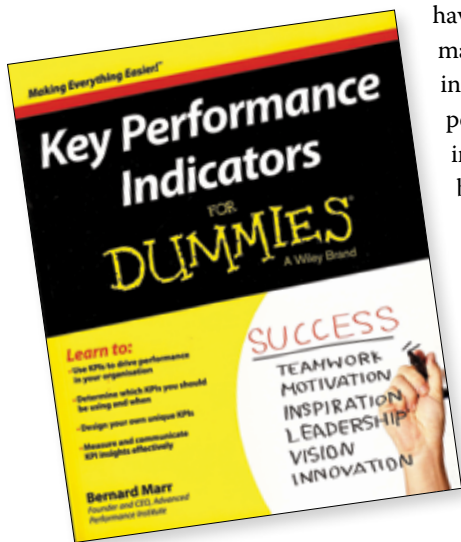
Sure, a large organization will need several sets of key performance indicators (KPIs), but most operating groups can’t make intelligent decisions or changes with too much information. Eventually, they’ll eliminate data in order to see the “forest for the trees.” But how can leaders in an organization make the decision of which information to keep and which to ignore?

I found *Key Performance Indicators for Dummies* through a reference on LinkedIn; given several other concerns at the time, I made the investment. Overall, it was a good investment; what I like about it, aside from its reasonable price and readability, are the sections that allow the reader to get concrete information about KPIs beyond financial data.

The challenge for facilities officers is their need to report financial status upstream to executives, and to maintain valuable metrics about the operations (physical, logistical, temporal, and human) that enable them make educated decisions and better manage their facilities operations. That means that facility KPIs need to be graduated such that each tier in the management structure has the information it needs to make decisions. In short, KPIs need to help answer the following questions: 1) Who is going to use the data? 2) What data will be collected and how? and 3) How will the data be maintained? If the KPIs are not developed with these questions in mind, it doesn’t matter what they are.

Marr’s book helps answer these questions, the most important of which is, “Who is going to use the data?” The basics of KPIs, KPI development, using the KPIs, and then communicating them are spelled out clearly in individual chapters. However, the “meat and potatoes” of identifying the KPIs is provided in individual sections focused on financial, customer, operational, and HR. It’s not necessary to read the latter sections if one understands how to develop KPIs after the first several chapters, but they are there if desired.

If you’re embarrassed by having a “For Dummies” book on your reference shelf, get over it or cover it up. *Key Performance Indicators for Dummies* is a valuable and helpful reference that will help you understand the value of some of the KPIs that APPA has developed through the FPI survey.



## LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DECEPTION: GETTING OUT OF THE BOX

The Arbinger Institute, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Oakland, CA, 2016, 192 pages, softcover, \$16.95.

One of the many things that APPA does, primarily through the Leadership Academy, is to help facility leaders at all levels to do a better job for their organization and employees. Moving from individual effectiveness—the easy part—to organizational effectiveness, the Academy utilizes material from several sources to help people be better at leading themselves, leading others, and then leading an entire organization.

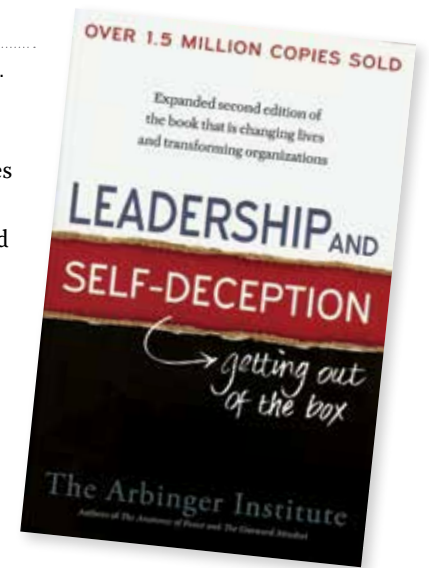
Doing better at one's job is the result of many factors, but the ability to understand one's self and to maintain good relationships with coworkers are two essential ones. Dale Carnegie wrote about developing relationships with others in his seminal work *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), a book I have referenced in this column several times before when reviewing texts on management and supervision. Thousands of books have been written since then, most of which are based on Carnegie's original work. His concepts and techniques have been successful for 80 years. That doesn't mean there are no new ideas or techniques, but Carnegie did a pretty good job of laying out the basics.

Academy instructor Lindsay Wagner shared *Leadership and Self-Deception* with me while we worked on a consulting project together. It's a relatively easy read, consuming the better part of a day if done in a single sitting. It's not long or complex; at the same time, it's the kind of book that requires some reflection and revisiting if one wishes to apply the concepts presented. The presentation is conversational, similar to many other books of its kind; management books invariably require some storytelling and situational presentations. This is not a criticism—just an observation after reading dozens of these books.

The concepts presented in *Leadership and Self-Deception* address some nuances that Carnegie left out and some that are not fully covered in Covey's *Seven Habits*. The book also helps explain why people get in a "box," how to identify the box, and some ways to help them get out of it. It presents a method for achieving success that doesn't necessarily involve more

people or harder work. It does require self-awareness and people skills, qualities that many people in the facilities arena find challenging. The concepts presented in *Leadership and Self-Deception* are used in the Leadership Academy, Level 2—yet another excellent example of the value of APPA's programs.

But whether you take part in the Leadership Academy or not, you should still purchase *Leadership and Self-Deception*. I'm happy to have it added to my bookshelf and plan on reading it again so I can become more effective. 💰



Ted Weidner is an associate professor at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, and consults on facilities management issues primarily for educational organizations. He can be reached at [tjweidne@purdue.edu](mailto:tjweidne@purdue.edu).

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