

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

It's the new fiscal year for many of you, and you're probably wondering how you'll manage another year of high service demands after the budget cuts you've been allocated. Never fear, the resources reviewed here are free, yet valuable.

HILLBILLY ELEGY: A MEMOIR OF A FAMILY AND CULTURE IN CRISIS

J. D. Vance, Harper Collins, 2016, 264 pp.

As facility officers, we are squeezed between the needs of the physical campus, leading to deferred maintenance—and the needs of the students who choose a campus, based on its appearance (i.e., the condition of campus facilities)—as well as price. We all know that you get what you pay for, but still there is a reluctance to spend money on things that don't have immediate, tangible benefits.

After years of advocating for additional education, colleges and universities are seeing considerable pushback and conflicted opinions. The value of additional education is demonstrated repeatedly, but usually only for those for whom the education was delivered under the right circumstances. That is, the student was predisposed to additional learning or to the type that was provided.

A memoir of J. D. Vance's first 25-plus years is presented as an example of the challenges facing our society.

Hillbilly Elegy is only a snapshot, but it's also a compelling story and reflection on the problems facing more and more people. A larger, more in-depth study was conducted by a controversial author, Charles Murray, in his book *Coming Apart* in 2012. In *Hillbilly*

Elegy, Vance presents his personal struggle and the struggle of family members to make it in our rapidly changing society.

The pressures of family, community, region, and the nation are laid out in a touching story of strong and weak family members affecting the life of a young man. While the story ends with a very successful situation, the route Vance took to get there was far from encouraging. A substance-addicted mother, a strong-willed grandmother (with a salty tongue), and no reliable father figure (he recalled 15 different men assuming the role before he reached adulthood) predicted a bad end, not because it was inevitable but because it was the normal outcome of this scenario.

Details beyond this are left for you to read. It's a touching departure from the normal material covered in this column, but it contains some perspectives we often ignore. Is there hope for the working class referenced in the memoir via the industry many of us support? It is likely. However, that requires taking on a completely different mindset, finding where our "cheese" got moved to, and tackling the problems we have now rather than the ones we wish we had.

The takeaway from *Hillbilly Elegy* is to keep struggling, maintain our commitments to family and fundamental goodness, and find new solutions to the new problems we are facing.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS

William C. Johnson, CreateSpace, 2010, 120 pp., hardcover, softcover, e-book, from \$11.99.

Several books that have been reviewed in this column appear to be for practitioners only, and outside the purview of most facility officers who are on the owner's side of the business. However, those books—and this one—are important components of an owner-practitioner's library, because they introduce concepts

that are not typically addressed within the organization. Understanding and knowing how a professional develops business relationships and actual business is important even if one is on the acquisition side of the equation.

First, what is a good professional attempting to accomplish through business development? Certainly,

it may be a new project for the company. That is the shallow approach that many organization and state rules assume, and attempt to develop regulations against. But as Johnson points out several times in *Business Development for Professionals*, business development is a combination of attitude and relationship; these are both traits that owner-professionals must develop to deal with internal customers as well as external providers. Imagine how difficult daily business would be if we didn't develop appropriate listening, synthesizing, and empathetic response skills. We would be little better than a toll taker on a bridge, performing a transaction irrespective of the driver's needs or concerns.

At the same time, a successful business development professional is one who identifies the skills and resources required to address the client's described challenges. We must do this on a regular basis as part of our customer-service function. Our call center may be handling thousands of calls each day. But we must listen carefully, respond effectively, and provide assurance that appropriate resources will be assembled to address each caller's concerns. The only difference between us and any other service-oriented business is that the caller may be "captured" and required to use our facility services rather than having an option to acquire the services from someone else.

In short, as a service provider to an organization, we must always be about business development even when the business is required to flow our way. Avoiding or ignoring business development (or preservation) most certainly leads to losing business. For this reason, *Business Development for Professionals* is a must read. It's light, easy, fast-paced, and full of practical information to help an otherwise hard-nosed technical person smooth out the rough edges and make connections at work that invariably result in better customer/client/stakeholder relations. ☺

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An advertisement for Comprehensive Facility Experts (CFE). The background is a grayscale image of hands reviewing architectural blueprints. In the top right, there is a logo for 'fm²' inside a white rounded square. The text 'COMPREHENSIVE FACILITY EXPERTS' is written in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font across the top. The words 'FACILITY MANAGEMENT METRICS' are written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, slanted across the center. At the bottom, contact information is provided: '888-887-9995, ext. 201', 'www.adamsfm2.com', and 'info@adamsfm2.com'.