

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

Facility officers never have enough resources, and some resources are harder to come by than others. The two books reviewed this month are valuable resources that can make a facility officer's job easier, even if they don't fall into the normal categories of added resources (people and money).

THE DISASTER RECOVERY HANDBOOK: A STEP-BY-STEP PLAN TO ENSURE BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND PROTECT VITAL OPERATIONS, FACILITIES, AND ASSETS, 3RD ED.

Michael Wallace and Lawrence Webber, AMACOM Books, 2017, 519 pp., hardcover, \$65.00

As we hear about hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, hacking, shootings, and other disasters, facility officers consistently ask themselves, "Is my organization prepared for something like what happened to the other guy?" If that question isn't asked, then it's likely that you just became the "other guy."

Development of a disaster recovery plan can be a daunting task. If it doesn't seem daunting, then you're forgetting a lot of possible disasters and the processes required that make your organization work smoothly in those situations. *The Disaster Recovery Handbook* reminds you of the possible disasters that require planning and presents a system to help you be as thorough as possible when dealing with them.

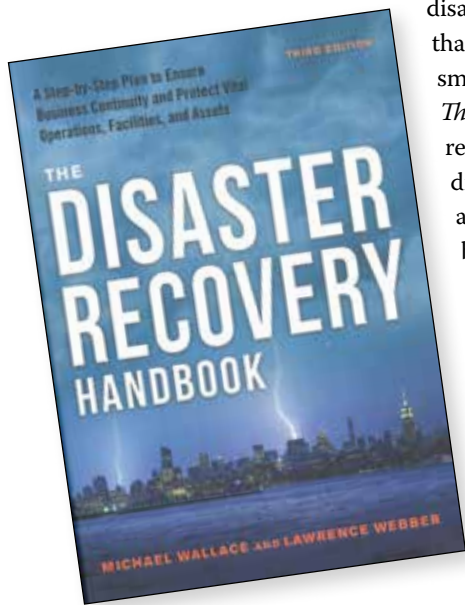
Since the notorious shooting at the University of Texas clock tower in 1966, colleges and universities have been aware of the need for an emergency action plan and a disaster recovery plan. Events since then have simply reinforced the need for these documents and made

it clear that a particular disaster or emergency is not unique to a particular campus or region—any disaster may affect any size institution, anytime, anywhere. (I'd list the events and places since 1966, but sadly, the list is far too long.) Federal programs and resources for disaster response, such as FEMA ICS-100 and others, provide us with an organizational structure to respond to a disaster in a uni-

form way, so everyone in the area understands that structure and how it fits into the response, and so that the disaster is handled effectively and efficiently and the public receives a clear message about the disaster. *The Disaster Recovery Handbook* helps with developing a clear organizational strategy to recover from the disaster (or operate during the disaster), so customers are affected as little as possible and so the business (particularly the income generation portion) gets back into normal operation.

The first half of the handbook identifies a meaningful list of functions that should be addressed in the recovery plan as well as several approaches to develop that plan and avoid omissions. It also identifies a structure to organize a plan, so it is focused while still addressing a wide range of needs, constituencies, and services. The second half gets into details of systems, providers, and personnel to help complete the plan. Overall, it is organized, clear, and useful.

I've experienced my share of disasters as well as the need to recover normal customer services quickly. I've assisted in the development of disaster plans that we all hoped we would never have to use. We didn't look at a neighbor's plan and copy it; we used a structure similar to the *Handbook's* recommendations. It's an approach I often fall back to—one of principles, customers, priorities, and services. Because the *Handbook* fits with my style, I recommend it highly. If you prefer to copy someone else's plan, which may address a service or process you don't have, then continue doing so and avoid the *Handbook*.



THE TYRANNY OF METRICS

Jerry Z. Muller, Princeton University Press, 2018, 184 pp., hardcover, \$24.95

Those who know me know I'm all about data and measuring things. I suppose it comes with my background, but it's also an area I've found many bosses consider important. This attitude of measuring things, making predictions on the measurements, or using metrics to indicate whether goals have been achieved has become more widely popular outside financial and technical areas. However, when I encountered *The Tyranny of Metrics*, I was both intrigued and concerned to see that measurements could be considered something bad.

There are many cases where metrics and measurement can result in a bad outcome. The measurement may not be bad if the inputs resulted in the correct output, but the behavior to be influenced by the measurement may have been counter to the goal of creating the metric in the first place. Consider a custodian who is measured by the number of cleaning complaints arising from customers served. The supervisor or manager equates complaints about cleaning services as an appropriate measure of customer satisfaction and part of the custodian's annual appraisal.

The custodian may find that customers are more satisfied by small favors provided, such as preparing coffee in the department break room or distributing the student newspaper to faculty offices. These non-cleaning tasks are performed in lieu of doing assigned work tasks, but they result in reduced complaints even when the area develops unsatisfactory characteristics, which could be characterized as "moderate dinginess." Alternatively, an HVAC mechanic's performance might be measured by hot-cold callbacks, and yet he or she manipulates the control system so equipment is not operated efficiently, resulting in no callbacks, but also tremendous wasted energy.

I'm sympathetic to negative opinions about metrics arising from poor selection. The author cites many failures ranging from college rankings to healthcare outcomes. The way metrics are used can also result in failures; I'm assisting APPA with

the FPI (Facilities Performance Indicators) to move the survey beyond comparisons with other institutions to something that will demonstrate value and support institutional goals. Metrics are not the

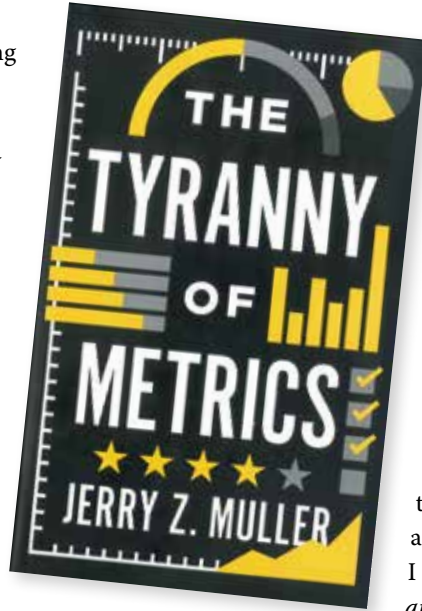
only solution; they are a tool among others used to achieve a solution.

The author concludes with a checklist of points to consider when selecting and using metrics. Rather than provide the checklist, I will simply recognize it as being consistent with best practices for management and validation of goal achievement, rather than measurement for measurement's sake.

When challenged by a business to utilize metrics and demonstrate an organization's accomplishments, I recommend reviewing *The Tyranny of Metrics*. You will make better choices and be subject to less gaming

(unless that's your goal). ☺

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If you would like to write a book review, please contact Ted Weidner at tjweidne@purdue.edu.