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Upcoming Events

IFMA LIVE Webinar

Sharing Floor Plans, Schematics and Drawings – Without Paper (rescheduled from Sept. 29, 2006)

Speaker: Tim Huff, Adobe Systems
Nov. 3, 2006 | 10:00 a.m. CST
online

IFMA LIVE Webinar

Improved Energy Performance Through Automated Benchmarking

Speaker: TBA from Save More Resources Inc.
Nov. 16, 2006 | 12:00 p.m. CST
online

FREE LIVE Webinar!

Change Management: What is it and Why is it Critical to the Success of Your Projects?

Speaker: Edie Fee, Resources Global Professionals
(date to be announced)
online

Operations and Maintenance Competency Course

Jan. 23-24, 2007
IFMA Headquarters
Houston, Texas

The Business of FM Course

Feb. 20-23, 2007
IFMA Headquarters
Houston, Texas

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NEW!

Project Success: A Barrage of Lessons Learned
Speaker: Kurt Neubek, CFM, FAIA, LEED,
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Now Available:

Greening Your Organization
Speaker: Meghan Carter Duggan, GCA Services

Saving Money and Improving the Quality of Electrical Usage
Speaker: Michael W. Ryan, Eaton Electrical / Cutler-Hammer

Understanding the FM Productivity Link
Speaker: Tim Springer, Ph.D., HERO Inc.

\$49.95/each, Member; \$79.95/each, Nonmember

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CAREER COLUMN

MARY REYNOLDS, DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your Sustainable Career

With the focus of this issue of the *FMJ* on sustainability, it is an opportune time to think about what it means to have a sustainable career. In preparing for this column, I did a brief search on Google.com on sustainable careers and the outcome was very interesting. First of all, in most of the material I reviewed, there appears to be a link to personal values, a sense of community and concern for the environment.

The Sustainable Careers Institute defines "sustainable careers" as:

- Viable and coherent, with decent compensation and dignity for the working person
- Vital and meaningful, with room to bring your whole self to work guided by ethical principles and skillful action
- Socially responsible, bringing innovative thinking, courage and creativity to bear on social problems
- Environmentally restorative, minimizing environmental costs, maximizing opportunities to restore damaged resources

My first reaction to this was "this is really idealistic," but upon reflection, there are some great practical takeaways from thinking about your career by including these sustainable elements.

The first two bulleted statements above really talk to personal values and philosophy toward work. There is a great deal of evidence that shows when people's personal values match the values in action in their workplace, they experience high

job and career satisfaction. Many examples of this can be found in the Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM) "50 Best Small and Medium Places to Work" (*HR Magazine*, July 2006; pp. 43-63). Some specific data from the employee surveys from the SHRM article state the 50 best companies actively solicit feedback from employees in a variety of ways including seeking feedback on their actions related to values such as integrity, respect for employees, etc.

A practical takeaway from this is to reflect upon what values are most critical to you in the work setting. Then, consider the "fit" between your values and your employer's values and how well your company or work group is doing related to those values. In their book, *Love It Don't Leave It, 26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work*, Beverly Kaye and Susan Jordan-Evans describe the "value fit" as key to staying in an organization and address values in at least a third of their 26 actions. Companies that actually ask their employees what would make them stay would be way ahead of the game in terms of retaining key talent according to Kaye and Jordan-Evans.

Beyond values, another critical element is our interests. I am reminded of my career in education when I was often asked by students "how do I tell my parents that I really don't want to do their career?" How many of us have made career choices based upon what others tell us rather than what drives us?

Early on, I made a choice to pursue a science major; something that I had an aptitude for, but in

college I realized my real interest lay in what makes people form relationships and behave the way they do. Most often with students and transitioning adults, I suggest that they take an interest inventory or list their interests and think about how they might find something in their current job or plans for their next position that might capture these interests. Another thing to consider with interests is they often change. Identifying the drivers or motivators for interests is key to how they might be successfully integrated into your career, so it becomes more of who you are and thereby contributes to sustaining your career.

Another element to consider is: what are your talents? A realistic assessment of your talents can help you focus on the next best possible career move, career change or even a project that can jump start a stagnant career. This task takes courage and some risk, but generally enables a person to successfully tap their individual creativity as well as steer them away from continually expending valuable energy on things that are not a natural talent for them.

A favorite example of this is how, early in my career, I was encouraged to take on a role as a project manager so I could be included on the "fast track." It was a very detail-intensive job and required extensive time management; I spent hours each day over several months laboring in that role with my project team continually clamoring for more detailed data and getting continual negative feedback as I tried to do more. The most valuable lesson I

learned was from the feedback that I sought from those trusted co-workers—being a project manager should not be in my next career plan! Enhancing your individual talents rather than fixing weaknesses is the most effective way to focus your skill sets and creativity.

Knowing that what we do will make a difference is the essence of the last two bullet points in description of "sustainable careers" above. For most facility managers, this is what you strive for and accomplish in much of what you do. According to David Rock in his article on Career Sustainability, on www.businessperform.com, "The desire to make a difference to the world around us is a deep human drive within all of us and tends to come to the fore once we have established ourselves as generally successful in life." Look around at admired companies such as the SHRM 50 or admired professionals, and you are likely to find at the core of what they do is simply a commitment to doing good.

For facility managers, this may be providing service with a smile, environmentally sound building design, environmentally safe cleaning agents and energy savings. Today there seems to be more emphasis on sustainability in our buildings and hopefully in our careers. The possibilities are endless!

Begin your educational experience today!

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