



Message from Your President

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If you've been in Facilities for any length of time, you have probably heard some discussions of "Generations in the Workplace." Over the course of the last 10 years, I've noticed that the tenor of this conversation has shifted a bit. There is not only the concern about new, younger people joining the workforce – but also about all of the Baby Boomers, who have put in their 30 or 40 years, and are now getting ready for retirement.

It's an important topic. There are not enough members of Generation X (my generation) to take over all the positions that the Baby Boomers are vacating and Millennials may not be seasoned enough to take on the Boomers' former jobs. This scenario is occurring every day at an accelerating pace. It's the reason the IFMA Foundation has worked so hard to build a network of accredited Universities that offer programs in Facility Management. . It's also why the IFMA Legal Council is stepping up its efforts to reach out to younger potential members

However, there are factors at work in the workplace that are mitigating some of the impact of the Baby Boomers' exit. The biggest that I see are the effects of automation and artificial intelligence – two forces that often work hand in hand. When I was starting my career, these forces (automation in particular) were mainly responsible for making factory jobs redundant. Why pay a person to do what a robot could do better?

As machines get faster and software gets better, we're going to see these trends accelerate and move into a lot of other industries. Today when you call customer service, chances are you don't speak with a person, you answer to an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that asks you to give a short description of why you're calling. As these systems get better, more and more help desk functions will be taken away from people and given to the IVR. Self-driving vehicles will disrupt many other industries including Uber and taxi drivers, truck drivers, pilots, and transportation generally.

It's not only blue collar work that will be disrupted. People in white collar jobs are also going to feel the effects. Routine document review that is done by contract attorneys today may be a function that software will perform in the future. Many secretarial and administrative tasks (calendar scheduling, dictation) have already been taken over by software. These disruptive trends will continue.

At some point, automation and artificial intelligence will make their mark on all industries. With that said, the "safest" professions for people will be those that require high levels of creativity, social intelligence and that some degree of human dexterity. While I don't think anyone's job is "safe," Facility Management probably scores fairly high on the scale of all 3 categories.

Big changes are coming to the workplace – probably sooner than most of us realize. My hope is that the IFMA LIC will be a resource for you to help you through these transitions and make sure your career prospers as we move into the next decade.

Thanks for being a member – I look forward to seeing you soon!

Joseph Geierman, MCR, CFM, FMP
President, IFMA Legal Industry Council

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About the LIC: The Legal Industry Council shares information among FMs from law firms and legal departments in corporations, academic institutions and government agencies. Discussions center on topics such as space planning and utilization, creative office services, outsourcing, regulatory information, emerging technology and software solutions.

Member Spotlight



Ernie Casas is the Facilities Manager at the law firm of Irell & Manella LLP located in Los Angeles, California. Ernie started his career at Irell & Manella in 1978 as an Office Services Clerk. Ernie has worn many hats at Irell, including (in order); Office Services Clerk, Copy Center Clerk, Pension Clerk, Pension & Profit Sharing Administrator, Office Services Manager, Branch Office Manager and Facilities Manager. While most of his career has been spent at Irell & Manella, there was a break in service when Ernie became the Office Manager for the Los Angeles Branch office of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett located in Universal City, California.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A FACILITIES PROJECT OF NOTE.

Having worked at one place for so many years I have experienced growth and reduction at Irell & Manella. Irell & Manella is currently located on five floors in the 1800 Ave of the Stars building located in Century City. The past several years have seen a reduction in population resulting in the need to let go of several floors. As a result many stakeholders had to be moved resulting in a political nightmare. I enjoy the challenge in assisting attorneys and staff as they are moved to different offices and locations and making their new office a place that will draw them back each day. I have had my share of nightmares. One evening as I was preparing to leave the office, I received a call that water was coming out of the ceiling on our 9th floor. I was having an office painted and the painter accidentally hit the sprinkler head with his ladder setting off a pyramid effect of water cascading down one side of the building for five floors including a pipe bursting when the water was restored. My motto is "Be Relevant" or in my particular case "Be irreverent."

IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE THAT YOU'RE WILLING TO SHARE?

I met my wife Lisa at Irell & Manella and have been married for 30 years. Yes, we both work in the same building but we rarely see each other. We do not even drive together. We do have lunch one day a week usually on Fridays. Our firm sponsors team activities such as basketball and softball. I am active on both the men's softball team and the co-ed softball team. My son David is an accountant with the Oxnard School District while my daughter Melissa is an LAPD Officer.

Upcoming Presentation: "Learning to Surf Chaos, Instead of Drowning in It!"



Please join the IFMA Legal Council on Wednesday, June 22nd for a presentation by Wayne Whitzell about managing workflow and "surfing chaos."

Chaos and change are a part of our lives. In the FM community, we face quite a bit of it every day. We can either choose to flail about or drown in the chaos, or we can learn to surf the big waves that keep coming at us. If you have the sense like you are "never caught up" or you are overwhelmed or worse yet, you wake up in the middle of the night thinking about work, then you need surfing lessons. This is not a Zen, philosophical approach. This is a practical nuts and bolts training to give you the skills you need to embrace chaos.

At the end of this program, you should be able to:

- Increase your productivity
- Reduce your self-inflicted wounds
- Prevent you and your staff from "dropping the ball"
- Gain clarity and mental freedom

Wayne Whitzell has been an active member in IFMA since 2000. Over the years, he has held various chapter positions such as Sustainability Committee Chair, Website Chair, and Sacramento Valley Chapter Vice President. Most recently, Wayne was recognized as IFMA's Associate of The Year for 2015. He has been to eleven World Workplace conferences and has presented at several IFMA chapter and council events and Facility Fusion. Wayne holds credentials as a LEED® AP, Business Energy Professional (BEP), and is a certified Green Business Operator (GBO). Wayne is the Executive Vice President for DFS Green, a company which specializes in cleaning carpets, fabrics, tile & grout, and natural stone across the United States. But, life isn't "all work and no play" for Wayne. On weekends he can be heard in Northern California theaters and clubs leading the acclaimed Neil Young & Crazy Horse Tribute band, Tribe of The Red Horse