

Facilitator — August/September 2011



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CRFP Spotlight

Jim Blackwell

What other restaurant companies have you worked for prior to your current position?

I started in the business as a HVAC/R technician with Marriott Hotels. My first position as a facility manager was with DavCo Restaurants (Wendy's franchisee). I have also worked with Pizzeria Uno and the ESPN Zone.

After spending so much time in restaurants, do you cook yourself? If so, what is your best dish?

I stay out of my wife's kitchen, and she stays away from my grill.

What was your first car?

A 1966 Chevy Impala. It was a fine vehicle laid low by youthful exuberance. In other words, I wrecked it.

What is your all-time favorite movie?

I can't pick just one, so here are my favorites by genre: Sci-Fi : "2001: A Space Odyssey" is still ahead of its time. Drama: "The Godfather, Parts I and II" — Brando, Deniro and Pacino. 'Nuff said. Western: "Unforgiven" is another movie with a great cast. Comedy: "Young Frankenstein" — Put the candle back! Sports: "Miracle."

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it?

I had a roof that only leaked when it wasn't raining. After months of beating my head against a wall and harassing the warranty roofer, I finally convened a site meeting with the original roofer, a back-up roofer, our HVAC contractor, our plumber and a general contractor. We eventually determined that one of the RTUs had a fault in the curb that allowed airflow under the roof membrane, which created an accumulation of condensate that would leak through intermittently, but almost never when it was raining. We replaced the curb adapter and, voila, the problem went away. To this day I'm not sure I fully understand the cause of the problem, but I am glad we were able to resolve it.

If you weren't a restaurant facility professional, what you would be?

Most likely I would have stayed in the trades. There is a profound satisfaction in maintaining and repairing complex machinery.

What was your very first job?

My first real job was a gas station attendant back when "full service" was the norm and not the exception.

What is the best advice you ever received?

It has been my good fortune to work with and for some exceptional people who have been generous with their insight and advice. One of my favorites is a quote from Teddy Roosevelt (paraphrased): In the face of crisis or opportunity, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The next best thing you can do is the wrong thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP?

Years of asking questions and listening to the answers. The volume of knowledge available from vendors, tradesmen and peers is incredible, if you are willing to ask questions. True competency is based not on what you know but what you can find out.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why?

Going through the process of attaining the CRFP has had some unexpected benefits. Even though I passed the test, the details gave me a clear understanding of what areas of expertise I need to study. Pass or fail, having a comprehensive assessment of your skills and knowledge is a valuable tool. On another level, the CRFP has quantified for the outside world what I already knew: I'm good at my chosen profession, and I know what I'm doing. The CRFP designation has tangibly improved my perception in the industry, among the vendor community and most importantly, within my own company.

What do you do for fun in your spare time?

Golf, English darts, reading, crossword puzzles, movies and playing with my grandkids. I have one more daughter to get through college, and I may be able to afford a Harley again.

What's the one thing most people would be surprised to learn about you?
I cry at movies.

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