

Facilitator — October/November 2012



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CRFP Spotlight

Russ Subjinske

What other restaurant companies have you worked for prior to your current position? Wendy's is the first restaurant company I have worked for. I gained a great deal of restaurant experience during the 19 years I owned my own engineering firm. I designed many foodservice facilities in hospitals, industrial office complexes, universities, nursing homes, strip centers and stand-alone restaurants ranging from QSR to fine dining. My designs encompassed HVAC, plumbing and fire protection. I set up maintenance programs for many industrial clients.

After spending so much time in restaurants, do you cook? If so, what is your best dish? I am an avid smoker! I have a Bradley digital six-rack smoker and use it almost every weekend. My favorite dishes include jerky, ribs, rib-eye, brisket, pulled pork, salmon, wings and prime rib. The best part is trying to come up with new rubs and sauces. Since my three children and their families all live in Columbus, I have a willing tasting panel every weekend (the free food helps)! My favorite is a 19-hour slow-cooked rib-eye roast with my special rub and basted in Rudy's Sauce.

What was your first car? My first car was a new 1968 Plymouth Barracuda. I worked summers and weekends to afford my dream car at 18 years old.

What is your all-time favorite movie? Well, that's a tough one. My wife Marge and I watch a lot of movies. Marge collects DVDs and Blu-rays. We have more than 1,000 movies. Three years ago, I decided my winter project would be to build a home theater with a 12-foot screen. I remodeled my basement, designed and built all the acoustical panels, and installed a nine-speaker Dolby Digital 7.1 Surround Sound System. I even built base shakers into the reclining chairs.

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it? The most challenging situation reared its head the first month on the job and has surfaced in one form or another almost every month since. It is obtaining funding for building support programs and capital replacements. Unfortunately, some organizations view nonoperations spending as insignificant and not part of the big picture.

Most operators believe if it is not broken, don't fix it, and if it is broken, keep fixing it rather than replacing it, as long as parts are available. If it does not involve funding customer-facing food and packaging preparation and service, it's like constantly running in the dark, uphill. There is, however, a light at the end of the tunnel, and it's called data. New technology allows for the gathering of information that can convince executives and finance people to open the company wallet because it will enhance the bottom line. The economy over the last four years has forced companies to look in every nook and cranny for short- and long-term savings. Data and ROI are king!

If you weren't a restaurant facility professional, what you would be? My real passion during college was to be a career Air Force fighter pilot. I was commissioned in college but hit a telephone pole on a motorcycle in 1970 and lost my commission.

What was your very first job? My father owned a sheet metal, roofing and plumbing company, so I started working there at the age of 9, breaking locks on a hand break for a penny a piece. I worked all summer to make \$183 to purchase a 16-gauge Ithaca pump shotgun for small-game hunting.

Working for my self-employed dad allowed me to learn the HVAC and plumbing trades before going to college. In fact, the reason I went to college is because my father worked me so hard that I decided I was not going to do that the rest of my life. I wanted to use my head, not my back.

What is the best advice you ever received? If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Rom 10:9-10

But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isa 40:31

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP? I do not believe there is any one thing I could point to

as being the single success factor in passing the CRFP. I believe it comes down to the school of hard knocks and having a diverse exposure to all components of facility services. Not just fixing things, but digging in to find out why it failed and how we prevent it from happening again. If it keeps failing, taking the time to figure out when to call it quits and being able to justify with information and data why the new capital expenditure should be made. Keeping current with technology to have data, working smart and efficiently are also important. It's all about researching, refining and implementing best practices and preventive maintenance programs that are best in class for your team. If this has been your work ethic for the last five years, you will pass the CRFP with flying colors.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why? Absolutely. I have a number of certifications in various fields, but none are as important in the restaurant industry as the CRFP. We all know you need every advantage to stay on top in today's economy and ever-changing business environment. The RFMA certification program shows employers, clients and associates that you are a committed and qualified professional. Certification is a mark of excellence that you carry everywhere you go.

What has been the most significant change in the restaurant industry, and how has it affected your job? I believe there are two items that have made a significant impact on the restaurant industry in the last five years: computerized maintenance technology and the recession. The recession has allowed a company's great facilities team and its maintenance spend needs (expense and capital) to enter into the big picture. A previously muffled voice can now stand with its operational peers to be heard and compete for funding on equal ground. Computerized maintenance technology has enabled the facilities team with data so they can measure, clearly define, defend and prove their funding needs.

What do you do for fun in your spare time? Golf, hunting and home projects. Living in Ohio, I golf from April to October (at least twice a week). I hunt from October to January (with my father, son and grandson at our 100-year-old cabin in Pennsylvania) and work on home improvement projects from January to April. I built a replica of Wendy's Store No. 1 in our basement. I was in charge of construction and facilities at that time and before Wendy's closed and demoed the store, I salvaged a few items and replicated the rest. I like to keep busy. I think my wife likes it, too. It keeps me out of her hair.

What's the one thing most people would be surprised to learn about you? Most people know me through my work or organizational involvement. They see my energy, drive for success and long hours. What people do not see is my greatest success, my most important accomplishment and what I am most proud of: my family.

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