



## Technology Today

Nic McLaughlin

### There's an for That App

Leveraging technology to make your job easier

A facility professional's workflow is demanding and constantly changing. Emails, phone calls, work orders, evaluations, projects, surveys, meetings: The list of things that vie for your attention never ends. Keeping up with it all is a constant challenge. How effective can you be at focusing on any one task when your mind is cluttered with what's next? You need a way to forget about the ongoing to-do list and focus on the task at hand.

Have you ever wanted a simple and effective way to manage all this? Don't worry: There's an app for that.

Software applications, or apps as they are commonly known, are great tools that come preloaded on most smart devices on the market. Mobile apps were originally offered for general productivity and information retrieval, including email, calendar, contacts, stock market and weather information. But today they are being used for all facets of personal and professional use. Most are easy to use and very cost effective.

### Your Digital Personal Assistant

As a facility professional, here are a few apps that can assist you with managing your schedule, appointments and projects:

#### Calendar

A calendar should be the backbone of your organizational quest. Use a calendar app when scheduling anything and everything, from your next work trip or conference call to when to follow up on the next phase of a project. A calendar will keep everything in an easy-to-read format and will give you a fighting chance to make time for everything. Link or share your calendar with your work group and have them do the same with you. This will allow you to view multiple people's schedules at the touch of a button. You will never again have an email thread 10 emails long trying to schedule that department meeting or plan a trip when you should be in town.

#### Reminders

Do you need to follow up on something but you are not sure when you will be at that location? Need to remember to make a phone call as you leave a job site? Use Reminders on your phone and set it to alert you as you are arriving or leaving a location. You will never worry you have forgotten to do something again.

#### Evernote

Tired of flipping through page after page of a notebook or legal pad looking for a particular note? Have you ever arrived at a store or job site just to realize you left your notebook on your desk? Evernote makes note taking and searching easy. You can store an endless number of notes and pictures. When ready, you can share those notes directly through the app or email them to whomever you choose. Using this app, you can also create collaborative notes for multiple users to be able to edit and modify.

#### Pages

Looking for a great word processing app with a more specific function? Planning a project with a small scope of work? Need to take some measurements and provide a visual reference for the contractor? Pages is perfect. Pages is a full word processor that gives you everything you need to create any type of document, and it's effortless to move your work from one device to another. You can also access your documents from the Web, share them and collaborate with others in real time. The app also makes it easy to take a photo of an area of the store and edit it. You can draw lines, arrows, boxes, text notes and add measurements all on the photo. Copy and paste in your standard scope for a project, tweak it to that location and you have a visually appealing, store-specific scope of work.

#### TripIt

Travel is a part of almost every facility professional's job description. TripIt is here to take some of the headache out of your travel plans. It does this by grouping all of your trip information in one place in an easy-to-read format. Simply forward all your hotel, flight, rental car and restaurant confirmation emails to TripIt, and it will automatically build a master itinerary with all of your details in one place. You can view your itinerary on any device—even when you are offline. In addition, you can link TripIt to your calendar and even share your travel plans with other TripIt users.

From calendars and reminders to notes and travel, apps can simplify your life and allow you to focus your effort and energy on the right tasks to make you a more effective facility professional. Take an active approach to finding and testing the apps that work best for you.

Disclaimer: All apps mentioned are simply the ones that the author prefers and is most familiar with. The apps highlighted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of RFMA or the RFMA Board of Directors. No financial compensation was received.

Nic McLaughlin has been with Jason's Deli for 12 years. His previous roles of Operations Manager and Eastern Regional Facility Manager provided him valuable knowledge and experience that helped prepare him for his current role as Director of Facilities. McLaughlin has been a RFMA member for five years and currently serves on the RFMA Board of Directors.