

CRFP Spotlight

Get to know some of our recent CRFP designees! We are excited that more of our members are joining this distinguished group. We credit their knowledge and experience, as well as their initiative for taking advantage of our online learning modules.

Congratulations to our CRFPs

Avi Bassrawi, CRFP — Corporate Engineer, Panda Restaurant Group

Tim Corcoran, CRFP— Corporate Projects Department, Jack in the Box/Qdoba

Kelly McMahon, CRFP — Facilities Services Manager, Starbucks Coffee Co.

Shawn McQuade, CRFP — Regional Facilities Manager, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and Brews

Kelly Otto, CRFP — Regional Facilities Manager, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and Brews

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Bassrawi: I like the speed at which things move within Panda. I actually work well under stress and pressure. Corcoran: I love the fact that my role allows me the opportunity to interact with so many different internal departments within our brands. It allows me to gain exposure to the different facets of our industry and various business units. The same can be said with regard to external resources and the various trades and skill-sets I get to interact with on my projects. Essentially, I love learning, and this job gives me such a great variety of chances to do this every day. McMahon: There's no chance to get bored or feel stagnant with so many new and exciting challenges to tackle. I also really love problem-solving, and we sure do get to do a lot of that in this field! McQuade: I enjoy the variety of my job. Every day is different. I get to find the best cost-effective way to solve problems on a day-to-day basis while also traveling to sites and meeting new people. Otto: Each and every day brings a new or different set of challenges. I also love meeting and working with people from all walks of life.

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

Bassrawi: I have been with Panda for 13 years. Before Panda, I was responsible for facilities and engineering at EJ Brach's candy plant. The building had 2.5 million square feet of space to maintain. Corcoran: I've worked in operations, facilities and construction for a former concept called Pat & Oscar's. I also worked in facilities and construction for another concept called Daphne's Greek Café (currently Daphne's California Greek). McMahon: Accenture, Rosati's Pizza (corporate office) and CDO Group/Brand Growth (both are outsourced construction management firm's). McQuade: I was a facilities coordinator, then a facilities manager with Aaron's Inc. Prior to that I was a realtor. Otto: Hard Rock Café International, Brinker International, Zurich Scudder Investments and Au Bon Pain.

When you were new to the industry, what was the most surprising thing you learned about the restaurant world?

Bassrawi: I learned never to say I know everything. Corcoran: That the restaurant industry prepares you for all aspects of business (operations, HR, QA, supply chain, training, etc.). Essentially, this is a great industry that humbles you every day, but also rewards you with great training for the business world. McMahon: I've been amazed at how dedicated and talented our employees are, from the top down. Starbucks partners really take pride in their jobs and our brand and want to help us succeed. McQuade: I came from the retail side of the industry and never worked with kitchens. As we all know, that adds a major dynamic to the facilities manager role. I was most surprised to realize the amount of equipment that needs to be working at 100 percent in order to serve safe and properly cooked food. Otto: How dedicated and truly amazing the people are across this industry. It doesn't make a difference what company you work for, there is a sense of family. You can pick up the phone and reach out to anyone, anytime to bounce around ideas or get the answers you need.

What is your all-time favorite movie?

Bassrawi: "Somewhere in Time." McMahon: "The Shawshank Redemption," but "Good Will Hunting" is a close second. McQuade: "Casino." I'm a big fan of mob movies, and that is my favorite! Otto: "The Lake House" and "The Green Mile."

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

Bassrawi: When you're responsible for many restaurants, there are challenges every day. My daily responsibility is to keep track of which repairs need the highest priority, while making sure every store is well maintained and taken care of. My objective of ensuring the restaurants stay open and are functioning properly can be challenging. Corcoran: The one that sticks out to me is being let go from a job . This was probably the event that proved to be one of my biggest challenges. I had a great position leading a growing company's construction and facilities efforts. Due to financial covenants with our bank, the company was forced to impose cuts, and my development team was eliminated with little warning. It was a tough thing to handle in the beginning. Your confidence and ego definitely takes a hit, but faith and perseverance carried me through this rough patch. In hindsight, that event humbled me and helped me see what was really important in my life: family and friends. Also, it was that event that helps drive me to be the best at what I do so my financial security and employ ability is more controlled by my capabilities versus a supervisor, company circumstance or something outside my control. McMahon: I would say the most challenging part of my current role as a facilities services manager was getting accustomed to being on call 24/7. I had previously done the project, budget and vendor management pieces before, but I definitely wasn't used to being woken up at 4 a.m. when one of my stores had a severe emergency. McQuade: When a restaurant closes due to a maintenance-related issue, such as no hot water, exhaust fans are not operating or a major plumbing backup, it is all hands on deck. You have to coordinate the service companies to either repair or replace equipment quickly to re-open the restaurant. Having a great network of contractors that you can depend on definitely reduces the chaos. Otto : Goodness, there are too many to list. I would say the most challenging are hurricanes and

floods; there's no predicting what Mother Nature will bring once she hits. And of course, all the Ares. At times I feel like a Are fighter.

My favorite work-related app is?

Bassrawi: We use ServiceChannel for work order management. It's a great tool that tracks the work being done in the individual restaurants. Corcoran: Google Maps because it eliminates the need to carry an extra GPS device when traveling.

McMahon: Waze. I drive around quite a bit, and Chicago traffic is awful! McQuade: Microsoft OneDrive. I can sync folders and documents from my computer to my smartphone and access them any time from the cloud. Otto: Google Maps and Google Photos.

What is the best advice you ever received?

Bassrawi: Measure twice, cut once. Corcoran: One bit of advice I have kept top of mind lately is to "manage your Vs." Don't be a victim, and be vulnerable. Essentially, it is far too easy to be a victim and complain about things. Make a choice to rise above the complaining and whining, and step up and do your part to fix the item (even if it is not your responsibility). One definitely involves more effort than the other, and both are better than just being the person who always complains. Being vulnerable is just that. Don't be afraid to be wrong or bad at something. Far too often, we miss out on great feedback, friendships or experiences because we are not vulnerable. Again, the Vs are important to me as these are two areas of my life I strive to improve in. McMahon: "Eighty five percent of the things you worry about never even happen." McQuade: Be upfront and honest whether the news is good or bad. Also, from a young age I've always been taught to treat others as you would like to be treated. Otto: Say it like it is, and tell the truth no matter the cost.

Who is the most impressive person you have ever met?

Bassrawi: My graduate school professor of mechanical engineering. He also was a professor of physics. We worked on many projects together, and his innovation and design concepts were very inspiring to me. Corcoran: There are so many great people I have met, or would like to meet, but I am most impressed with my dad. My dad, on paper, is no different or special than most people in this world. However, he is truly the most special man ever in my life. He is an extremely talented man who can fix virtually anything. Also, he is a humble man who to this day still continues to teach me how to take pride in my work, take care of my family, to measure twice and cut once, and to leave things better than you found them.

McMahon: This one is a toss-up: Muhammad Ali (My friend used to work for and live with him, so I got to get autographs and take fake punching photos with him; he had a great sense of humor.); Jim my Carter (I met him while working on a Habitat for Humanity project; he is absolutely selfless and humble.); and our CEO Howard Schultz (I've had the pleasure of meeting him a couple of times; he's truly an inspiring leader). McQuade: My college real estate professor. He shared all of his successes and failures in life and taught us the importance of getting back up if you fall down. Otto: Louis Cane, Founder of Au Bon Pain.

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

Bassrawi: I have had a lot of hands-on experience with repair and maintenance. This experience, as well as my daily duties in facilities management, contributed to my success. I also learned a lot from RFMA's CRFP Prep Course. Corcoran: Time in the construction and facilities fields. Any amount of time in these fields forces you into situations outside your knowledge area or comfort zone and will teach you important things you never knew you needed to know (like the types of things found on the CRFP exam). McMahon: The online learning modules are the greatest resource for passing the test. If you study those, you'll do well! McQuade: Past experience as a facilities manager and excellent mentors. The online preparation course also helped prepare me for subjects I was not as familiar with. Otto: I attribute my successes both personally and professionally to good grace of God.

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

Bassrawi: Yes, especially if you want to broaden your knowledge. The prep course exposed me to many areas that I am not currently responsible for. Corcoran: Yes, in fact, I encourage everyone to set this as a goal. Any opportunity to learn and grow is a blessing. Also, any opportunity to grow your stature within your industry should never be taken lightly. As RFMA members, we need to do our part to grow our industry and profession. Obtaining your CRFP is a great way to grow our industry and yourself. I challenge you to manage your Vs and come up with a plan in the next year to obtain your own CRFP. McMahon: Yes. It's a perfect way to brush up on areas of our field that you might not be especially comfortable with, and it's a great validation of your knowledge base and skills. I am actually leading a group of my peers through the study modules in order to (hopefully) have our whole team certified very soon. Otto : Absolutely. I highly recommend it. It validates your level of skillset and knowledge not only to yourself, but to the rest of the industry.

What do you do for fun in your spare time?

Bassrawi: I enjoy wood carving and exercising, especially running. Corcoran: My spare time used to be about me, but now my joy truly comes through watching my kids grow and develop. McMahon: I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, travel (especially international), playing and watching sports, going to concerts and music festivals, collecting rare beers and participating in trivia contests. McQuade: I love spending time with my wife and daughter. I also greatly enjoy Ashing and mountain biking. Rain or shine, I try to spend as much time outside as possible. Otto: Hanging out with my two amazing children, and spending time with family and friends. And anything physically challenging: working out, biking, hiking and motorcycling—the list goes on and on.